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Jewish Jesus, Gentile Church – Jewish meal? The Origins and Development of the Lord's Supper through a Jewish Prism.

A Thesis submitted to Middlesex University in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Theology

Middlesex University
Supervised at London School of Theology
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Abstract

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Title: Jewish Jesus, Gentile Church – Jewish meal? The Origins and Development of the Lord’s Supper through a Jewish Prism.

Degree: Master of Theology

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In this thesis I argue that the origins and development of the Lord’s Supper are best understood through a Jewish prism. In order to do this, I create a distinction between ethos and practice.

The four critical research questions that govern the thesis are: Firstly, why did the Lord’s Supper come about in the first place? Secondly, are the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord’s Supper linked through the death of Jesus? Thirdly, was the Lord’s Supper affected by evocations of Jewish celebrations? And finally, to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord’s Supper during the first century?

The first notable outcome of the study is five identifiable motifs of the messianic banquet: a festal celebration, God’s final judgement, a messiah figure, a gathering at the end of time and the ultimate establishment of God’s reign. Second, that Jesus indicated the character of his death and how it was to be later understood during the Feeding of the Crowds. Finally, that Didache 9.4 may be taken as an implicit reference to the death of Jesus.

Acknowledgements

Anyone who has undertaken any kind of research probably knows, like I do now, that it takes a combination of three elements to bring it to completion: trust in God, belief in yourself and the support of friends and family. I would like to thank the special people in my life who, in different ways, encouraged me to keep going. Firstly, I would like to thank Wirral Christian Centre (or Gateway church!) and Dave and Irene Mooney for their financial support while I was still a student; it was greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank my supervisor, William Atkinson. Aside from being an excellent scholar, the sense that he takes God's call with him into every facet of his life has always been a source of encouragement to me. I've felt privileged that I've had the opportunity to get to know him on a more personal level. His continued belief that I could apply myself and reach my goal helped to keep me going.

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1 Thesis Introduction

It's fairly well-established now in historical Jesus studies that Jesus' significance rests on his Jewish identity. 'One of the most significant rediscoveries of late twentieth-century biblical scholarship is the Jewishness of Jesus. Although he sometimes criticized the people and leaders of his nation, it is now clear that Jesus did so from within Judaism and for the sake of Israel'.¹ However, this scholarly perspective was not always the case:

this quest for Jewish roots may be unsettling to some. We all tend to be creatures of habit. No one likes to have long-held viewpoints challenged or established practices questioned. Change is often disturbing. In this connection, the exact relation between Christianity and Judaism is, in many ways, complex. Admittedly, many areas lack clear and definitive answers. Nevertheless, the goal of this investigation is to strengthen the Church's understanding of its foundations through both thought and action. Our concern is to demonstrate why the Church cannot afford to be passive about the Jewish experience in history – whether ancient or modern.²

Wilson was writing prophetically as, in some ways, the 'third quest for the historical Jesus' had only just started to gain momentum.³ What I think Wilson was also right to draw our attention to, was that the relationship between Christianity and Judaism is complicated. Indeed, one could say that the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper appeared to be a focal point of Judaism and the emerging Christianity in their complicated relationship. White sums it up well:

¹ John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001, 15.

² Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, xvi.

³ See John P. Meier, 'The Present State of the "Third Quest" for the Historical Jesus: Loss and Gain,' *Biblica*, volume 80, 1999, 459-487, citing 459.

Nowhere else are the Jewish roots of Christian worship so important – or so complicated – as they are in the eucharist. Every type of Jewish public worship made a contribution to the Christian eucharist almost as if Jesus and his followers had deliberately sought to build on the foundations the Jewish people had laid. We now realise that whenever these Jewish foundations have been forgotten, the eucharist has been distorted in practice and misunderstood in experience. An understanding of the Jewish contribution can hold Christians true to their own eucharist.⁴

The tensions around the development of Christianity from a predominantly Jewish sect to a distinct religion in the first century may loom large. Discussion around this tension has been called “The Parting of the Ways”.⁵ Although not the central focus of the thesis, and therefore not discussed in a comprehensive way, it must be acknowledged as part of the context of the Lord’s Supper. There was a shift from Jewish cultic practice being centred in Jerusalem (or even Israel) to places, such as Corinth, where the surroundings were religiously pagan and mainly gentile. Therefore, it might be natural to expect differences in practice from its Jewish predecessor:

The situation could well have been different once the church moved out into the pagan world and its members began to include former pagans. If such people had formerly taken part in pagan rites, they could certainly have been tempted to interpret what went on in the church meeting by analogy with what went on in a pagan group.⁶

⁴ James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship: Revised Edition*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990, 220.

⁵ Philip S. Alexander, ‘The Parting of the Ways,’ from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism in James D. G. Dunn (ed.), *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A. D. 70 to 135*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, 1-26, citing 1-2.

⁶ I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord’s Supper*, Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1980, 27-28.

While that might have been the case, some have pressed the point and arrived at quite radical conclusions. Paul Bradshaw has argued that because of the varying traditions found at different localities in the early church, there would have been a diversity in theology and practice in the Lord's Supper during the first century.⁷ He takes this further and argues that there were groups whose eucharistic practice was not influenced by the Last Supper or the institution narratives - that is, the words spoken by Jesus as recorded in the synoptic Gospels:⁸ 'the historical setting of the sayings or any close link with the death of Christ was not regarded as of importance in early traditions of Eucharistic thought'.⁹

It might go without saying that this has huge ramifications for one's understanding of the origins and development of the Lord's Supper. More to the point, it would be hard to see this as *not* removing the Supper from any Jewish roots it may have had. It does also raise legitimate questions around why the Lord's Supper came about in the first place when different New Testament writers appear to hold a strong connection between Passover and the death of Jesus (1 Cor 5.7; 1 Pet 1.18-19). Also, it appears that Paul expects the Corinthians to regard the words and setting of the Last Supper as important for their own purposes (1 Cor 11.23, 26). How might one tackle the apparent juxtaposition of such issues?

In order to address this, I intend to argue that the origins and development of the Lord's Supper are best understood through a Jewish prism. This may prove helpful in clarifying a number of

⁷ Paul F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004, vii.

⁸ This is not to say that I discount 1 Corinthians or John's Gospel but identifying what the phrase 'institution narratives' is taken to refer to.

⁹ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 14-15.

difficulties that stem out of Bradshaw's position. As such, I will outline next which areas the thesis will be concerned with; concomitantly, I will clarify the ideological perspective that informs my understanding of the significance of the Jewish roots of the Lord's Supper.

Firstly, this thesis is not intended as an exhaustive response to the topic of Hellenised meals and symposia even though the topic has a similar underlying thrust, in that both inadvertently remove Jesus from his Jewish culture.¹⁰ As such, I will draw on this discussion, especially where Hellenised portrayals of significant meals might have been favoured. However, our focus is the Lord's Supper in particular. Furthermore, I would not want to detract from the sterling work already done by Blomberg on this very subject.¹¹

Secondly, this is not intended as a refutation of supersessionism. Although I passionately believe that the doctrine which supports that the body of Christ has now superseded the Jewish people in God's redemptive plan is unfounded, I recognise that the focus of my study is the effects of emphasising the Jewish elements to help clear the lens through which we investigate the character of the Lord's Supper in the first century. This might not create a clear-cut distinction, though, as talking about the Passover and Lord's Supper does at least raise the topic of covenant and the nature of its fulfilment in Jesus.¹²

Following on from my previous statement, my third contention is that I am not emphatically trying to discount all pagan influences on the

¹⁰ See Craig Blomberg, 'Jesus, Sinners and Table Fellowship,' *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, volume 19, 2009, 35-62, citing 35-38.

¹¹ See Craig L. Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2005.

¹² For a further discussion, see Matthew Myer Boulton, 'Supersession or Subsession? Exodus Typology, the Christian Eucharist and the Jewish Passover meal,' *Scottish Journal of Theology*, volume 66, 2013, 18-29.

Lord's Supper. As I stated above, it would be quite natural for gentiles and pagans to draw parallels with their own religions or cultures.¹³ While I do happen to agree with scholars who have found in the majority of cases that the Jewish parallels are more satisfying,¹⁴ my primary focus in the thesis is to argue the origins and development of the Lord's Supper in the first century can be best understood through empathetically Jewish eyes. This is different than saying there can be no room or possibility of pagan influences. I think Marshall's sentiment sums it up well: 'although we must never forget that the Jews were a minority group in their own land and were surrounded by pagans who followed their own religions, there is nothing that would suggest that Jesus himself was influenced by anything other than Judaism'.¹⁵ While I appreciate that what I have said here is nuanced, I hope I have made my intentions clear.

Fourthly, this is not intended as a comprehensive treatment of the breakdown of Jewish-Christian relations in the first century. Although I said earlier that the partings of the ways serves as a backdrop to our discussion of the Lord's Supper and as such I will draw on it occasionally, all the issues around the topic fall beyond the borders of the focus of our thesis in that it is clearly a multifaceted discussion. Furthermore, I concede that Dunn has already offered an extensive and incisive treatment of this topic.¹⁶

Finally, I will not address consequent development of the Lord's Supper in later centuries. As with any research, one has to define the

¹³ 'There certainly were plenty of other religious groups worthy of note in the Roman period, and even some that shared a number of important features with early Christianity'. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003, 1.

¹⁴ See Blomberg, 'Jesus', 50 and Marshall, *Supper*, 29.

¹⁵ Marshall, *Supper*, 27.

¹⁶ Dunn, James D. G., *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, second edn; London: SCM Press, 2006.

scope of their thesis; mine is strictly what has bearing on the first-century paschal practice. While I have consulted works which discuss Justin Martyr and other writers from the second century onwards,¹⁷ my research interest has remained in the first century.

Having outlined what this thesis will not address, I will now highlight what I will focus on. Firstly, I have said in the title ‘through a Jewish Prism’. I’ve already discussed the nature of the complicated relationship between Christian and Judaism; that is why I’ve utilized the word *prism*. I do not set out in this thesis to pretend that the picture is not complicated. However, I do think that taking an empathetically Jewish approach to our study of the evidence will help clarify our understanding of first-century Lord’s Supper practice. I hope it will illuminate the different colours and the multifaceted aspects that contributed to the origins and development of the eucharistic meal.

Secondly, I draw a distinction between ethos and practice. What I’ve observed in my research is that occasionally one can build an argument from silence. With regard to the Lord’s Supper, it has been argued that because there isn’t a clear indication of including certain elements in their liturgy, the *practice* aspect, then that means it probably didn’t reflect in their belief, *ethos* or theology. My preferred terms are ethos and practice but I’m including other terms here to help make clear what I envisage. With regard to Bradshaw, because certain eucharistic practices don’t make explicit references to the death of Christ or the Last Supper, this leads to the conclusion that the death of Christ could not have been a binding ethos in every eucharistic expression of the Lord’s Supper. I would like to contend that this is a false premise and perhaps raises more questions than it answers.

¹⁷ In particular, see Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*.

Not only might it be an argument from silence, it also inadvertently removes the Supper from its Jewish roots via the Last Supper which stems from the Passover.

Four research questions that, although not exhaustive, will guide the direction of the discussion and the nature of the thesis from here are: firstly, *why* did the Lord's Supper come about in the first place?¹⁸ Secondly, are the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord's Supper linked through the death of Jesus? Thirdly, was the Lord's Supper affected by evocations of Jewish celebrations? And finally, to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord's Supper during the first century?

In terms of method, the thesis touches on a number of disciplines. Although primarily rooted in historical Jesus studies and New Testament exegesis, it also draws heavily on liturgical studies. Furthermore, I am indebted to the great work done by particular scholars in the field of 'Christ-devotion',¹⁹ which perhaps seems to bridge the gap between historical Jesus and liturgical studies.²⁰ This also underpinned my approach in the earliest stages of my research.²¹ In a similar vein as Christ-devotion studies, I anticipate finding a stronger resonance between what Jesus intended and what the early church evoked. I expect this to be no less the case than in the origins and development of the Lord's Supper in the first century. If Jesus being Jewish was important for his identity and purpose, then it may be regarded as important to the first believers, also. Having identified

¹⁸ Hurtado, *Lord*, 27.

¹⁹ The term is accredited to Hurtado, *Lord*, 28.

²⁰ L. W. Hurtado, 'Early Devotion to Jesus: A Report, Reflections and Implications,' Wordpress.com website, (<https://larryhurtado.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/early-devotion-to-jesus2.pdf>; accessed August 2016, 2).

²¹ In particular, James D. G. Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus?: The New Testament Evidence*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2010, 3-5.

my remit as the first century, I will now tackle the sources that will help to sketch the scene.

2 Tackling the Appropriate Sources

The purpose of this chapter is to ‘tackle’ the sources. The reason I say tackle is twofold: although one could write a candid description of which sources are used and which are not, it will hopefully engage the reader more to find interaction here between the different source documents. Secondly, I think it addresses a number of more pertinent issues. It should become apparent early on that the sources themselves, and the picture they offer, are not as straightforward as one might hope. This could raise a valid question: if there are uncertainties regarding the dating of the documents, how can we even know they genuinely reflect the situation in the first century?²² In order to address this, I would like to draw a line of distinction in our thinking:

First, it does not always follow that how a practice was kept historically is how it would have been practised later. An analogy we will keep returning to, in part thanks to Helen Bond,²³ is Christmas in the twenty first century. How we celebrate Christmas today may have little bearing on how it was originally thought of. By comparison, one should not presume that how the Passover was practised in the first century would have reflected how it was described in the Pentateuch. Of course, this is not to say it *didn't* reflect elements of historical practices, but our aim is to focus our efforts on the first century and collaborate evidence from documents of that time.

This brings us on to our second distinction: the reliability of the documents utilised. Although we have highlighted the concern of ‘reading in’ later practices into the first century and that there may be

²² The reader should take any mention of ‘the first century’ as referring specifically to the Common Era.

²³ In a different context, see Helen K. Bond, ‘Dating the Death of Jesus: Memory and the Religious Imagination,’ *New Testament Studies*, volume 59, 2013, 461-475, citing 471.

some uncertainty around the dating of particular documents, it is quite a different claim to suggest that they do not offer a useful insight into the first century. Where there has been contention regarding the validity of a source, I have attempted to argue a positive case for its inclusion. Furthermore, I have tried, where possible, to verify its finding with another source. Although one can't promise to have *not* overlooked something, I have done my utmost to create a faithful prism by which one can identify first-century practices.

At this early point there is a difficulty to address. There appears precious little written on Jewish religious practice in the first century,²⁴ although there are notable exceptions.²⁵ I will attempt to sketch out the Passover practice of the first century in relationship to the various sources, so that comparisons with the Lord's Supper can be drawn later in this thesis. This will also help give the reader a 'feel' for the different relationships of the sources included and help provide a grounding for the rest of the thesis.

The feast of the Passover finds root in the pinnacle act of God preparing a 'road out'²⁶ of Egyptian oppression for his covenant people.²⁷ The primary text that depicts the event is Exodus 12,²⁸ where various ordinances for the paschal rite are described, although other references to the Passover are found throughout the Old Testament.²⁹ While there is doubt as to what extent Exodus 12 may

²⁴ Larry W. Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion*, The Didsbury Lecture Series, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999, 29 n. 42.

²⁵ Ibid; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE-66 CE*, London: SCM Press, 1992, ix.

²⁶ The Greek term *exodos* could be defined this way. William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010, 31.

²⁷ Wilson, *Father*, 240.

²⁸ Festal instructions are found predominantly in the Pentateuch. Ibid, 240-242.

²⁹ Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: its Life and Institutions*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961, 484. While there are differences of opinion regarding the

have informed the practice of the first century,³⁰ no one can reasonably doubt that the Passover commemorates the redemptive act of God in the release of his covenant people from slavery.³¹

There appears a consensus that the Passover was a lively, family celebration.³² The testimony of Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, may help to verify the festive atmosphere. Josephus records the Passover as 'a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt, when they offer sacrifices with great readiness' (Jos. *Ant.* 17.9.3).³³ Great readiness may imply that those who offered the sacrifices were excited to partake. In respect to the credibility of the record of Josephus in this instance, its context lends weight to this assertion; the cited text was written during the revolt against Archelaus³⁴ shortly after the death of king Herod, the father of Archelaus, in 4 BCE.³⁵ The death of Herod is attested to in the Gospel of Matthew also (Matt 2.19). Thus, in this instance, we have good reason to take the record of Josephus as credible. Not only does Josephus relate the Passover to freedom from Egyptian tyranny but also provides a possible insight into the attitude of the partakers. Admittedly, the partakers could have feared what would happen to their welfare had they not offered sacrifices but, given the positive statement by Josephus, this appears improbable.

construction of the Exodus text, to constitute the creation of the text at cost to 'the pericope as a whole' may provide only conjecture. In other words, it starts to create strenuous difficulty in reading the passage if the genesis of the text jars with the whole construction of the book. See John I. Durham, *Exodus*, Word Biblical Commentary, volume 3, Waco: Word Books, 1987, 152-153 and Wilson, *Father*, 239.

³⁰ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 13.

³¹ Wilson, *Father*, 239-240.

³² Hurtado, *Origins*, 28; J. B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover: from the Earliest Times to A. D. 70*, London Oriental Series, volume 12, London: Oxford University Press, 1963, 232.

³³ William Whiston (tr.), *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999, 572.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 575 n. 1.

³⁵ Federico M. Colautti, *Passover in the Work of Josephus*, Leiden: Brill, 2002, 97.

Following on from Josephus, there is another text that supports the Passover as a joyous occasion, indicated by the possible use of wine.³⁶ The evidence is taken from *The Book of Jubilees*, dated between 164 and 100 BCE.³⁷ The text says that ‘All Israel was eating the paschal meat, drinking the wine, and glorifying, blessing, and praising the Lord God of their fathers’ (*Jub.* 49.6).³⁸ The drinking of wine at the Passover is also attested to in the Mishnah (*m. Pesah.* 10.2).³⁹

While the hazard of reading later Jewish practice into the New Testament has been noted above, perhaps it is possible to discern the Passover Seder⁴⁰ ‘in embryonic form’⁴¹ during the first century via particular sources. One aspect that appears in different sources is the Passover haggadah, a ‘ritual retelling of the exodus events’.⁴² Philo, a first-century Jewish philosopher, offers an interpretation of the unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Philo says that ‘Unleavened bread is (a sign) of great haste and speed, while the bitter herbs (are a sign) of the life of bitterness and struggle which they endure as slaves’ (*QE* 1.15).⁴³

It is striking that in two of the Gospel accounts, Jesus is recorded as offering an interpretation of the bread and wine at the Last Supper.⁴⁴

³⁶ Segal, *Hebrew*, 232.

³⁷ James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, 21.

³⁸ James C. VanderKam (tr.), *The Book of Jubilees*, Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1989, 316.

³⁹ David Instone-Brewer, *Feasts and Sabbaths: Passover and Atonement*, Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament, volume 2a, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011, 176.

⁴⁰ Order. Instone-Brewer, *Feasts*, 116.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Joel Marcus, ‘Passover and Last Supper Revisited,’ *New Testament Studies*, volume 59, 2013, 303-324, citing 303.

⁴³ Ralph Marcus (tr.), *Philo Supplement 2: Questions and Answers on Exodus*, London: William Heinemann, 1953, 24.

⁴⁴ Matt 26.26-28; Mark 14.22-24.

It is also recorded in 1 Corinthians and the Gospel of Luke, but the text in Luke could be disputed.⁴⁵ While it is contested whether or not the Last Supper of the historical Jesus was a Passover meal,⁴⁶ the Gospel tradition could testify to the Passover practice of the first-century. While Philo does offer an interpretation of the unleavened bread and bitter herbs, it is disputed how accurate a source it is. Segal is cautious to cite Philo as a credible source for details of ritual.⁴⁷ This stems from the fact that Philo spent his life in Alexandria and was highly influenced by Greek philosophy.⁴⁸ While that appears the case, the argument is naïve in certain respects. The philosophical conceptions of Philo functioned within the framework of Jewish monotheism.⁴⁹ Secondly, the Passover practice of the first century looked towards Jerusalem.⁵⁰ To divorce Philo from first-century Jewish thought and practice is injudicious.

In respect to the Gospel tradition and with regard to the Passover, Segal also warns of the hazard in reading later Jewish practice into the New Testament.⁵¹ While affirming their independent witness, Segal also expresses concern as to how verifiable the New Testament Passover evidence may be.⁵² This stems from the understanding that the New Testament is the fruit of redaction, retains bias and 'may not be wholly the work, or based upon the work, of first-hand witnesses'.⁵³ While it is right to caution the reading of later practice into the New Testament, it does not follow that one should exercise

⁴⁵ 1 Cor 11.23-25; Luke 22.19-20; Bradshaw, *Origins*, 3.

⁴⁶ David Instone-Brewer, 'Jesus's Last Passover: The Synoptics and John,' *The Expository Times*, volume 112, 2001, 122-123, citing 122.

⁴⁷ Segal, *Hebrew*, 29.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Dunn, *Worship*, 84.

⁵⁰ Segal, *Hebrew*, 241.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

caution when trying to discern if the evidence of the New Testament demonstrates itself as historically reliable. We do not have time to address the argument in depth, suffice a few remarks.

It is injudicious for any writer to argue for ‘value-free, presupposition-free historical enquiry’.⁵⁴ Furthermore, perhaps only by an evident passion for the topic does one find the cause to write in the first instance.⁵⁵ In respect to the redaction and deficiency of eyewitness accounts, this negative verdict is not necessarily the only conclusion that can be drawn. In his distinguished book, Bauckham strongly argues the case that the Gospels ‘embody the testimony of the eyewitnesses’⁵⁶ as preserved through rigorous oral tradition.⁵⁷ While there is not time to discuss the argument of Bauckham at length, the purpose is simply to indicate that the belief of Segal is insufficiently argued as he does not evaluate other viable conclusions for the evidence he presents. For the duration of the essay, I will presume the thesis that the Gospels retain eyewitness testimony; their relevance to our purpose could be tremendous. If the New Testament contains eyewitness testimony, it would provide a window into the first century and help verify Passover and Lord’s Supper practice respectively.

Another event where New Testament evidence becomes useful with regard to the Lord’s Supper is the Feeding of the Five Thousand. The event is recorded in all four Gospels,⁵⁸ and a second feeding of four thousand is to be found in Mark and Matthew.⁵⁹ The miracles appear

⁵⁴ William P. Atkinson, *Jesus before Pentecost*, Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016, 6.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006, 6.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 306.

⁵⁸ Matt 14.13-21; Mark 6.30-44; Luke 9.10-17; John 6.1-15.

⁵⁹ Matt 15.32-39; Mark 8.1-10.

to have similarities to the Last Supper, which have been taken as reflecting the understanding of the Gospel writers.⁶⁰ However, we will discuss further their historical relevance to the Lord's Supper later in the thesis.⁶¹ Although the historical reliability of the Gospel of John is disputed,⁶² for our purpose the validity of the Johannine account in regard to the Feeding of the Five Thousand will be presumed. Because of multiple attestation,⁶³ there would appear no compelling reason to question the Johannine feedings' authenticity.⁶⁴ With respect to a historical defence of the whole book, Atkinson presents a persuasive argument.⁶⁵ Although this certainly does not comprehensively settle the matter, for our purpose this will have to suffice.

Concerning other sources found in the New Testament canon, the primary text in the New Testament that discusses the Lord's Supper is 1 Corinthians 11.17-34; the term itself derives from the text.⁶⁶ It has been argued that the 'breaking of bread' in Acts 2.42 is an expression of the Lord's Supper.⁶⁷ A variant of the term may appear in 1 Corinthians 10.16,⁶⁸ while another document also appears to take the

⁶⁰ Marshall, *Supper*, 96.

⁶¹ Page 80.

⁶² Bond, 'Death', 467.

⁶³ For a brief summary of the most common criteria, see Bruce J. Malina, 'Criteria for Assessing the Authentic Words of Jesus: Some Specifications,' in Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans (eds.), *Authenticating the Words of Jesus*, Leiden: Brill, 1998, 27-46, citing 27-28. For a table outlining the development of historical Jesus criteria over time, see Stanley E. Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research: Previous Discussion and New Proposals*, London: T. and T. Clark, 2000, 102. For a discussion weighing how useful different historical Jesus criteria might be, see Robert H. Stein, 'The Criteria for Authenticity,' in R. T. France and David Wenham (Eds.), *Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, volume 1, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980, 225-263, citing 229-251.

⁶⁴ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, volume 1, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003, 667.

⁶⁵ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 16-23.

⁶⁶ Marshall, *Supper*, 15.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 127.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 15.

expression as referring to the Lord's Supper.⁶⁹ Although that may appear the case elsewhere, it has been disputed whether Acts 2.42 should be taken as an expression of the Lord's Supper.⁷⁰ Jude 12 also notes the presence of 'love-feasts' and that may have parallels to 1 Corinthians.⁷¹

In order to continue our discussion of possible first-century documents, it is crucial to address a key text outside of the New Testament; namely the Didache. The reason is that the text contains an early rite for the Eucharist.⁷² There are challenging aspects to the context of the document, namely: the time of writing, geographical location, intertextual difficulties, redaction criticism and theological outlook. Hence, a chapter has been taken to address the dating of the document and to highlight possible implications for our understanding of the Eucharist.⁷³ While there are references to the Eucharist found in other writings of the Apostolic Fathers (Ign. *Eph.* 13; *Phld.* 4; *Smyrn.* 7; 8),⁷⁴ one could regard them as fragmentary and I will draw on those references only if they help contrast or clarify evidence found in the New Testament or the Didache.

As stated above, the challenge in trying to establish first-century practice is perhaps the difficulty in dating and verifying the documents. The core text for the Passover Seder is the treatise

⁶⁹ See J.B Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer (trs.), *The Apostolic Fathers*, second edn, Leicester: Apollos, 1990, 157.

⁷⁰ David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Nottingham: Apollos, 2009, 161.

⁷¹ See Marshall, *Supper*, 110.

⁷² For a discussion as to whether the rite is in fact the Eucharist proper, see Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache: A commentary*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998, 141-143.

⁷³ Page 109.

⁷⁴ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, second edn; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, 328. For a discussion on 1 Clement, see Georges Blond, 'Clement of Rome,' in Matthew J. O'Connell (tr.), *The Eucharist of the Early Christians*, New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1978, 24-47, citing 25.

Pesachim, part of the Mishnah.⁷⁵ As the Mishnah was not codified until the late second-century CE,⁷⁶ it comes with a note of caution that it may lack precision or historical accuracy in its representation of first-century practice.⁷⁷ However, if it is possible that the Mishnah does contain rabbinic tradition that was rigorously systematised, could one discern the content that stemmed from the New Testament era? As the result of fine research, Instone-Brewer verifies historical evidence through consulting earlier Jewish sources and relevant content to the New Testament.⁷⁸ With regard to the New Testament, Dunn asserts that the synoptic Gospels contain an accurate description of the rubric of Judaism prior to 70 CE.⁷⁹ Although it could be said that Dunn states the point aggressively, the possibility that the New Testament can validate claims of other Jewish documents could offer necessary evidence. Furthermore, it could also help verify evidence pertaining to Jewish celebrations in the first century.

I hope that by the end of this chapter it could be said that the findings here have resulted in an honest, engaging discussion of the sources utilized in the thesis. Although one might hope that the picture was clearer, I believe the documents mentioned might offer a faithful insight into the first century. This is the necessary starting point to ‘springboard’ any further discussion of development or divergence in the Passover and the Lord’s Supper. To further ensure that one has a firm footing by which to build our discussion and help inform the reader, we will now review the contributions of particular scholars

⁷⁵ Daniel B. Wallace, ‘Passover in the Time of Jesus’, Bible.org website (<https://bible.org/article/passover-time-jesus>; accessed April 2016).

⁷⁶ Arthur G. Patzia, Anthony J. Petrotta, *Pocket Dictionary of Biblical Studies*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2002, 81.

⁷⁷ Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, London: SPCK, 1992, 1.

⁷⁸ Instone-Brewer, *Feasts*, xi.

⁷⁹ Dunn, *Partings*, 145-146.

whose work has helped to shape much of the content of the thesis.

3 Reviewing the Key Authors

The intent of this chapter is to discuss the key authors whose writings on the topics of the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper are of particular interest. The writings address a number of historical and textual difficulties that may arise out of study of the Lord's Supper in the first century. Therefore, I have decided to focus the attention of the discussion on one or two key parts of each work which pertain to the thesis. It is worth noting that I have arranged the books chronologically, in order that any possible development of thought may also be discerned.

3.1 *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias

Although it could be considered somewhat dated, the book has undertaken a number of editions that include revisions.⁸⁰ The book is considered to be the 'classic'⁸¹ work in regard to the study of the Eucharist.⁸² The thrust of the book is the Last Supper, in particular the words of institution spoken by Jesus as recorded in the synoptic Gospels.⁸³ I will narrow the focus to two specific areas that are relevant for our purpose.

⁸⁰ See Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, London: SCM Press, 1964, 7-8.

⁸¹ James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, Christianity in the Making, volume 1, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003, 772.

⁸² While discussing the book referred to, Wright states that it 'remains basic'. N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, volume 2, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1996, 555 n. 63.

⁸³ Jeremias, *Words*, 84.

3.1.1 A Passover Meal

The book starts by highlighting the apparent discrepancy around the Last Supper: namely that the synoptics portray the meal during the Passover, whereas John appears to depict the event as the night before.⁸⁴ After having earlier surveyed different possibilities in Jewish meal practice,⁸⁵ Jeremias concludes 'that the Last Supper would still be surrounded by the atmosphere of the Passover even if it should have occurred on the evening before the feast'.⁸⁶

Marshall's work is influenced by Jeremias. Marshall also surveys Jewish meals and finds that the Passover fits the setting of the Last Supper.⁸⁷ Where Marshall differs is in finding the two-calendar theory proposed by P. Billerbeck convincing.⁸⁸ Although favouring the Johannine date of the Passover, Jeremias says that 'This theory has been so thoroughly and carefully argued, especially by Billerbeck, that its possibility has to be admitted'.⁸⁹ While Jeremias and Marshall agree in principle that the Last Supper was a Passover meal, they differ as to what extent the meal informed the practice of the Lord's Supper. Although Marshall appears open to the possibility that the Passover may have helped inform the Lord's Supper,⁹⁰ Jeremias says that 'the report of the synoptic gospels that the Last Supper was a Passover meal *is at variance with the rite of the Early Church*'.⁹¹ He continues that 'The reminiscences of the Passover can therefore not

⁸⁴ Ibid, 17-19.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 26-36.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 88.

⁸⁷ Marshall, *Supper*, 23.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 74.

⁸⁹ Jeremias, *Words*, 23.

⁹⁰ Marshall, *Supper*, 128.

⁹¹ Jeremias, *Words*, 62, italics original.

have come from the liturgical practice'.⁹² Bradshaw appears to share the sentiment of Jeremias and detects diverse strands of tradition in the institution narratives, saying that 'The various attempts that have been made by modern scholars to harmonize the texts are thus attempting the impossible'.⁹³ Thus, Jeremias affirms that the Last Supper would have been Paschal in atmosphere if not the actual Paschal rite. Ostensibly, this seems to confirm the link between the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper, because of the New Testament writers' clear use of the image of Jesus as the Lamb, sacrificed for the salvation of his people.⁹⁴

Conversely, Jeremias sees this as making the relationship between the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper more complicated. The links with the Passover seem to create dissonance between Jesus' final meal with his disciples and the Lord's Supper practised by the early church. Jeremias recognises that the practice is radically different in the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper. However, this assumes that they would replicate one another in the practice, whilst ignoring that there might be similarities in the ethos (inward intention or character of a people). However, if Jesus prophetically fulfilled the covenant promise of the Paschal lamb, then transformation of Lord's Supper practice to reflect the pivotal shift in understanding of Jesus as messiah does not seem surprising. Thus, Jeremias' work on the links between the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper is enlightening for our thesis although not all of his conclusions will be accepted.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 10.

⁹⁴ Page 37.

3.1.2 Break Bread

Jeremias also helpfully considers the component elements of bread and wine. It is interesting to note that Jeremias appears to be one of the few scholars prepared to concede the verse in Acts as evidence of a bread-only Eucharist absent of wine,⁹⁵ especially considering the possible dichotomy between the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper practice of the early church. Indeed, it is hotly disputed what is meant by the phrase 'the breaking of bread' (Acts 2.42),⁹⁶ whether referring to a whole meal or the eucharistic rite.⁹⁷ While it might be tempting to situate either possibility in relation to Jewish common meal practice exclusively,⁹⁸ caution should also be exercised.⁹⁹ There appears two reasons for concluding such: firstly, Jeremias states that 'The Christian communities, whose members were mostly from the poorer strata of society, did not always have wine available'.¹⁰⁰ Secondly, pertaining to the possible dichotomy referred to earlier, *'The meals of the Early Church were not originally repetitions of the last meal which Jesus celebrated with his disciples, but of the daily table fellowship of the disciples with him'*.¹⁰¹ If the rite was not patterned after the Last Supper, then the drinking of wine would not prove necessary. Furthermore, Jeremias says that 'In everyday life water was drunk'.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ See Bradshaw, *Origins*, 56.

⁹⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, the reader should take any scripture references as being taken from the *Holy Bible: English Standard Version*, Cambridge: Good News Publishers, 2011.

⁹⁷ See Bradshaw, *Origins*, 55-57.

⁹⁸ See Graham H. Twelftree, *People of the Spirit: Exploring Luke's View of the Church*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2009, 130. Conversely, see Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, second edn., London: T. and T. Clark, 1998, 111-112.

⁹⁹ See Marshall, *Supper*, 128.

¹⁰⁰ Jeremias, *Words*, 115.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 66, italics original.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 51.

While Jeremias might be correct regarding the inclusion of water in certain eucharistic practice, the idea that the eucharistic practice of the early church were repetitions of Jesus' table fellowship with the disciples may raise more questions than it answers. Indeed, it is an argument from silence. Although there might appear no clear evidence that the breaking of bread recorded in the book of Acts directly followed the liturgy of the Last Supper, it does not follow that the alternative model replicated the disciples' table fellowship with Jesus. Furthermore, why did it have to model either? The early Christians could have remembered Jesus by integrating his life and death into already established Jewish meal practice, as noted above.

It is interesting to note that, again, Jeremias has assumed that the practice reflects the ethos. Arguably, just because the meals of the early church did not replicate the Passover, it does not mean that they did not have the death of Jesus in mind as they partook. In fact, one could suggest that alteration in the Lord's Supper practise reflected an altered understanding of the Passover in light of the significance of the life, and death, of the one they followed.

So far, while consulting other key writers, our discussion emphasised the belief of Jeremias that the Last Supper was a Passover meal and that

the breaking of bread should be understood as a reference to the Lord's Supper. Also, Jeremias' argument exemplifies a lack of distinction between ethos and practice. Let us turn to the next publication by an eminent New Testament scholar.

3.2 *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* by I. Howard Marshall

The book started out life as a series of lectures given by Marshall in the late nineteen-seventies and early nineteen-eighties and expansion followed subsequently.¹⁰³ The book offers a fairly comprehensive treatment 'of the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper in the New Testament'.¹⁰⁴

While it is necessary to delimit the scope of any study, a perceived weakness of method could be that it does not offer a careful consideration of contemporaneous documents of the first century outside of the New Testament canon. However, the book is an excellent resource and has been noted as core reading on the topic.¹⁰⁵

The book surveys Jewish meals in the first century, the Last Supper narratives, the difficulties around the setting of Jesus' final meal prior to his death, the significance ascribed by Jesus and his surroundings to the meal and the meaning attributed to the Lord's Supper in the early church.¹⁰⁶ We will now focus our attention on different calendars.

3.2.1 *Different Calendars*

While the two-calendar theory was briefly noted in the previous section, it was not addressed in any detail. The primary intent behind such theories is to offer a plausible reason for the difference in the date of the Passover between the Gospel of John and the synoptic

¹⁰³ Marshall, *Supper*, 9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Tony Lane, *Exploring Christian Doctrine*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2013, 261.

¹⁰⁶ Marshall, *Supper*, 7.

accounts.¹⁰⁷ One popular variant of the theory was proposed by Annie Jaubert, who argued that Jesus followed the solar calendar whilst the priests, the lunar calendar – hence the discrepancy.¹⁰⁸ However, the proposal has suffered criticism.¹⁰⁹ After having addressed various textual difficulties around the topic and tackling different possible solutions,¹¹⁰ Marshall concludes by stating that ‘Billerbeck’s theory is the most plausible’.¹¹¹ What proves fascinating in respect to Marshall is that, to the best of my knowledge, he is one of the few scholars who favours the argument of Billerbeck as many prefer to take the Johannine chronology.¹¹²

The unique premise in the argument is what the difference of calendar is built on. Marshall states that ‘there was a group of Sadducees who reckoned that the offering of first fruits must take place on the day after the Sabbath that fell during the feast of Unleavened Bread’.¹¹³ Marshall goes on to say that ‘the Pharisees took the same phrase to refer to the day after the feast of Passover’.¹¹⁴ Because of the apparent difference in reckoning, it is argued that ‘the Sadducees tried to “fix” the calendar so that the offering of first fruits would fall on a Sunday’.¹¹⁵ Thus it is argued that as a result, in order to keep the peace, the Sadducees ‘allowed the Pharisees to slaughter their Passover lambs one day early’.¹¹⁶ While I recognise that the argument

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 71.

¹⁰⁸ Bond, ‘Death’, 463.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 464; Marshall, *Supper*, 73.

¹¹⁰ Marshall, *Supper*, 62-74.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 74.

¹¹² For preference of the Johannine chronology, see Bond, ‘Death’, 464-465; Marcus, ‘Passover’, citing 303. For notable exceptions who recommend the calendar theory, see Wilson, *Father*, 246; Instone-Brewer, ‘Jesus’ 123.

¹¹³ Marshall, *Supper*, 72.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

may appear somewhat dense, the consequences would be that the synoptics were working from the Pharisaic calendar and John from the Sadducean.¹¹⁷

The perceived weakness of the argument, according to Marshall, is that although there appears evidence as stated above to show where a calendar discrepancy took place, there is no evidence to show that the Passover lambs were killed over two days.¹¹⁸ Therefore, it is ultimately conjecture.¹¹⁹ However, there are two reasons why the two-calendar theory is helpful for our purposes. Firstly, the scholars who reject the two-calendar theory tend to give preference to either John's account or the synoptic account. However, accepting the two-calendar theory allows equal treatment of each account. Secondly, it helps give weight to a Passover reading of the Last Supper accounts, this in turn affects how we can understand the Lord's Supper.¹²⁰ After having discussed the different calendars, we now turn our attention to briefly address 'The Significance of the Last Supper'.¹²¹

3.2.2 Prophetic Significance

One crucial aspect raised by Marshall is the 'messianic banquet'.¹²² There were those Jews who, around the time of Jesus, saw the Passover as prophesying the arrival of the messiah. The result would be that Israel would experience freedom from bondage to their oppressor and the inauguration of the heavenly feast with the messiah

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 73.

¹¹⁹ However, it may solve the contention taken by some scholars as to how all the lambs were killed in one night. See Sanders, *Judaism*, 136.

¹²⁰ 'The account of the Last Supper is found in the three synoptics and in 1 Corinthians, and these multiple attestations serve as evidence of the widespread observance of the Lord's Supper in the early church'. Tim Carter, *The Forgiveness of Sins*, Cambridge: James Clark & Co, 2016, 191.

¹²¹ Marshall, *Supper*, 76.

¹²² Ibid, 79.

at the end of time.¹²³ After having addressed possible texts that allude to the arrival of the messiah to deliver, and the difficulty of whether 'the Last Supper should be taken as referring to the Lord's Supper or to the heavenly banquet',¹²⁴ Marshall concludes that 'the Lord's Supper is linked to the Passover in that the Passover is a type of the heavenly banquet while the Lord's Supper is the anticipation of the heavenly banquet. The middle term of comparison between the Passover and the Lord's Supper is the heavenly banquet'.¹²⁵ A potential weakness in method is that if the heavenly banquet is as significant as Marshall says, it is unfortunate to have such a short section to address it in the book.

Another fascinating part of the book is that Marshall asserts that in anticipating his death, Jesus envisaged himself as taking on the role of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.¹²⁶ After highlighting textual parallels,¹²⁷ Marshall states that:

Jesus thus envisaged himself as the Servant who carries the sin of the people, pours himself out in death, and so achieves reconciliation with God. The language used in Is. 53 to describe the work of the Servant is sacrificial, and Jesus takes this concept over to explain his own death.¹²⁸

Another factor evident in the Last Supper accounts is the covenant reminiscences contained in Exodus and Jeremiah (Exod 24.8; Jer 31.31-34).¹²⁹ Marshall says that 'at the Last Supper we have the basis for

¹²³ Marshall, *Supper*, 77-79, 169 n. 7.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 78-79.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 80.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 89.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 91-93. See also Carter, *Forgiveness*, 195-196.

their [the New Testament writers] conviction that they lived in the era of the new covenant'.¹³⁰ Although Marshall's argument does sufficiently account for how the New Testament writers understood Jesus' sacrificial death (1 Cor 5.7-8) as encapsulated in his words and actions at the Last Supper (Luke 22.7), it has to be admitted that the evidence supporting a link to Isaiah 53 in the immediate context is rather slim.¹³¹

In short, we have noted three aspects in respect to the argument of Marshall. Firstly, the possible presence of two calendars around the Last Supper, a Sadducean and a Pharisaic. Secondly, that Jesus saw himself fulfilling the role of the suffering servant in light of the blood of the covenant in Exodus and the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah. Thirdly, the link between the Passover and the Lord's Supper *is* the messianic banquet, and the Lord's Supper anticipates the eschatological messianic banquet.

3.3 The Feast of the World's Redemption by John Koenig

The next book that our discussion turns to is *The Feast of the World's Redemption* by John Koenig. The publication contains many fascinating points of argument and is aimed at addressing concerns raised by scholars belonging to the 'Jesus Seminar' in relation to the origins of the Eucharist.¹³² However, the primary goal is to foster a closer relationship between the Eucharist and Christian mission than commonly thought.¹³³ The book is divided into six chapters covering the Last Supper, the Lord's Supper, the place of the Eucharist in Christian mission, two chapters on other New Testament texts and the

¹³⁰ Ibid, 93.

¹³¹ For a further discussion, see Steve Moyise, 'Jesus and Isaiah,' *Neotestamentica*, volume 43, 2009, 249-270, citing 260-261.

¹³² Koenig, *Feast*, 5.

¹³³ See *ibid*, xiii.

conclusion. Our attention will turn primarily to the Last Supper.

3.3.1 Historical Core

Many scholars have noted diverse strands of tradition in the words of Jesus recorded in the New Testament commonly referred to as the institution narratives.¹³⁴ Particular scholars have concluded that, in light of the various strands, it is not possible to discern with any precision the words spoken by Jesus before his death.¹³⁵ Koenig argues in favour of a detectable historical core. Furthermore, it is probable that the institution narratives provide three phrases that are ‘very close’ in wording to ‘what the historical Jesus said at table with his disciples on the night of his arrest’.¹³⁶ The words are ‘This [bread] *is* my body... ‘[The wine in] this cup *is* the covenant in my blood’... ‘Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God’.¹³⁷ In building his argument, Koenig relies on parallels found in Jewish practice, therefore strengthening the argument for historical probability.¹³⁸

What is peculiar to Koenig’s argument is that the Jewish emphasis supports the idea that Jesus was offering an invitation for the disciples to partake in the messiah’s missional activity during his final meal, although not understood as such at the time.¹³⁹ Koenig says that ‘the roots of that mission, as they eventually discovered, lay in this meal, this ritual that had made them privileged partners in the messiah’s sacrifice even before it happened and would later require their own

¹³⁴ Page 21. For a discussion on the Gospel of John and the Last Supper, see Marshall, *Supper*, 133-139.

¹³⁵ Koenig, *Feast*, 20.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 35-36.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 36, bracket and italics original.

¹³⁸ See *Ibid*, 31-33, 36-37.

¹³⁹ See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 61.

sacrifices in the messiah's service'.¹⁴⁰ A perceived weakness in the book is that although Koenig states that he does 'not try to define "mission" in a comprehensive way',¹⁴¹ it would have been helpful to elaborate, given that mission is imperative to the thesis.

The significance of Koenig's discussion for our purpose would be that if one accepts that there are authentic sayings spoken by Jesus in the institution narratives, then one could reasonably expect that to influence the consequent development of the Lord's Supper. Having briefly discussed a historical core in the institution narratives, the discussion turns to our next author.

3.4 Eucharistic Origins by Paul F. Bradshaw

Another key book relevant to our review is *Eucharistic Origins* by Paul F. Bradshaw. As a liturgical scholar, his lens contrasts in a helpful way with New Testament scholars such as Marshall, thus offering a fresh contribution to our discussion. By his own confession a 'splitter',¹⁴² Bradshaw does not anticipate finding a common thread where one could directly trace how the eucharistic practice of the first century evolved into the later rites of centuries after.¹⁴³ The book referred to builds upon a chapter in one of his earlier publications, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*.¹⁴⁴ The book in question is arranged to proceed logically: first the New Testament records of the Last Supper institution narratives, followed by a chapter centred on the Didache, then a shift to the first Christian meals, and the chapters that follow are dedicated to writers from the second century onwards.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 41.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, xii.

¹⁴² Ibid, ix.

¹⁴³ Bradshaw, *Origins*, vii.

¹⁴⁴ See *ibid*, ix.

¹⁴⁵ See *ibid*, v.

Beginning with an early starting point, he then branches out.¹⁴⁶ There are two prominent parts of discussion that are worth noting: the first is in respect to the institution narratives and their relevance to the death of Christ.

3.4.1 *The death of Jesus*

Although the description may suggest otherwise, it is a point of contention as to what extent the 'institution narratives' of the Last Supper had an effect on consequent Lord's Supper practice.¹⁴⁷ Although Koenig defends a core historically within the Last Supper tradition, as previously noted, Bradshaw retains a different position. After discussing the acknowledged two traditions of the institution narratives, Mark/Matthew and Paul/Luke, Bradshaw argues that therein is contained a third strand.¹⁴⁸ To do this, Bradshaw addresses concerns in the longer Lukan manuscript and takes the shorter text as original,¹⁴⁹ stating that 'If this were true, it would effectively eliminate from the original the features that Luke and Paul share in common and require us to view the account in Luke as a distinct third version of the tradition'.¹⁵⁰ The result would be that the shorter text of Luke would now contain the cup-bread order that also appears in the *Didache*.¹⁵¹

In light of the third strand of tradition, Bradshaw extends the argument further to suggest that there might have been an even wider diversity of Lord's Supper practice, to the extent that some variants were not influenced by the institution narratives or the death of

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*, vii.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 1-2.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 3-5.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 9-10.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 5.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 3.

Christ.¹⁵² He further supports his hypothesis by drawing on documents that do not reference the institution narratives, such as the Didache.¹⁵³ As such, Bradshaw states ‘that the historical setting of the sayings or any close link with the death of Christ was not regarded as of importance in early traditions of Eucharistic thought’.¹⁵⁴

One weakness might be that Bradshaw does not appear sufficiently to address texts in the New Testament that regard Jesus as the sacrificial lamb as important to their understanding (1 Cor 5.7; 1 Peter 1.19) and why the variant practices would have emerged in the first place if that were not the case. Furthermore, it has been noted that the manuscript tradition for the longer Lukan text is strong.¹⁵⁵ This now draws us to our next section, the Didache.

3.4.2 *The Didache*

Bradshaw dedicates a chapter to the Didache.¹⁵⁶ The document in question is fascinating because it is generally thought to have been written at some time in the first century and as such, contemporary to some of the New Testament documents.¹⁵⁷ What is particularly notable for our purpose is that the document contains what appears to be a eucharistic rite. This is interesting for two reasons: firstly, the New Testament does not offer any liturgical ‘script’ as such for the Eucharist except possibly for the Last Supper accounts in the synoptics and 1 Corinthians. Secondly, it is striking to have such instructions dating from so early on. Because of this, scholars have

¹⁵² Ibid, 10.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 14-15.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 14-15.

¹⁵⁵ James. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, third edn, London: SCM Press, 2006, 180 n. 24.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 24-42.

¹⁵⁷ See Bradshaw, *Search*, 85-86.

disputed the exact nature of the meals as described in the *Didache*.¹⁵⁸ The primary reason for this being that the *Didache* does not contain explicit reference to the Last Supper, the institution narratives or the death of Christ.¹⁵⁹ To address this, certain scholars have treated the *Didache* as a 'primitive' rite.¹⁶⁰ After having surveyed the different possibilities proposed by scholars, Bradshaw concludes that 'If the meal in the *Didache* were thought of as simply one of a number of different patterns that existed side-by-side in early Christianity, each being the practice belonging to a particular community or group of communities, then there would be no pressure to slot it into an especially early time-frame'.¹⁶¹ The presence of the cup-bread order in the *Didache* may strengthen Bradshaw's claim of diversity in Eucharist practice. Perhaps the weakness in method is that although apparently open to the possibility,¹⁶² Bradshaw appears to presume that the New Testament texts were reflective of separate communities, rather than being circulated among the early believers.¹⁶³

In short, Bradshaw argued for an absence of the influence of the institution narratives and the death of Christ in certain early eucharistic practice along with a diversity in meal practice as relevant to the *Didache*. For our purpose, while we agree with a diversity in Lord's Supper practice, it seems more tentative to suggest that there were not similarities in the thought behind the Lord's Supper. If the death of Christ were not a binding ethos in early Lord's Supper practice, it might raise more questions than it answers. One such question could be why the diversity came about in the first place if it

¹⁵⁸ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 25.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 25-27.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, ix.

¹⁶³ See Richard Bauckham, 'For whom were the Gospels written?,' *HTS Theological Studies*, volume 55, 1999, 865-882, citing 867-868.

did not stem from Jesus' death. Moreover, any response that places emphasis on Jesus' post-resurrection meals, at the expense of his death seem to be making an artificial distinction as all the events are closely related.¹⁶⁴ We now turn to the final book to review in our discussion.

3.5 *Jesus and the Last Supper* by Brant Pitre.

The final book in our inquiry is a comparatively recent publication.¹⁶⁵ It is particularly noteworthy as it has been referred to as 'the most extensive study to date of the historical Jesus and the Last Supper'.¹⁶⁶ Although technically it is not the newest publication in our bibliography, it is the most up-to-date study dedicated solely to one of the central concerns of our thesis: namely the Last Supper.

The book is divided into seven chapters all relevant to a particular theme: problems that arise from the Last Supper, the figure of Moses in Jesus' vocation, the Exodus manna, Last Supper dating difficulties, the Passover themes in the Last Supper, the messianic banquet and a concluding chapter.¹⁶⁷ I will focus on one aspect that benefits our thesis - the multitude feedings and the meaning invested in the miracle by Jesus.¹⁶⁸ The relevant content for our purpose is found in Pitre's chapter, 'The New Moses'.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Page 103.

¹⁶⁵ Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015, iv.

¹⁶⁶ See *ibid*, the back-cover.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, vii-viii.

¹⁶⁸ See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 68-78.

¹⁶⁹ Pitre, *Jesus*, 66-90.

3.5.1 *Invested meaning*

It has been widely acknowledged by scholars that there is a commonality in wording between the feedings and the Last Supper accounts found in the synoptic Gospels.¹⁷⁰ While that appears the case, some appear cautious to pursue this any further. For example, Marshall recognises the parallels found and the historical validity of the event but states that 'It is clear that the Last Supper is in no sense anticipated in the feeding miracles, except in that both were occasions of fellowship with Jesus and both involved the satisfaction of hunger by Jesus'.¹⁷¹ Pitre, however, does not share the sentiment of Marshall.

Pitre sees significance in the fact that the event is 'the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four Gospels',¹⁷² illuminating the significance of the event for the Gospel writers also. Pitre defends the historical validity of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, particularly against the notion that 'the feeding of the five thousand was created by the early church from accounts of the Last Supper and the influence of the early Christian practice of the eucharist, which realities are being read back into the life of Jesus'.¹⁷³ Perhaps the weakness in what appears an otherwise strong argument is that Pitre does not allocate sufficient time to the historical concerns raised by the second feeding recorded only in Mark and Matthew.

After strengthening the historical validity of the first feeding,¹⁷⁴ Pitre directs our attention to the belief that not only was Jesus understood to be the type of Moses prophesied in the Old Testament (Deut 18.15-

¹⁷⁰ See Marshall, *Supper*, 96.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Pitre, *Jesus*, 67.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

22)¹⁷⁵ but that 'Jesus seems to have both deliberately *modelled* his words and deeds on events from biblical history and *anticipated* what he would ultimately accomplish at the Last Supper'.¹⁷⁶ While not tied intimately to the Moses figure,¹⁷⁷ Atkinson, in his *Jesus Before Pentecost*, arrives at a similar reasoning. After having raised noteworthy differences of emphasis in the Gospel accounts of the Feedings of the Crowds, Atkinson concludes 'that in veiled terms, to be understood only with hindsight after the event, Jesus fed the crowds *in order to predict his death and its purpose*'.¹⁷⁸

So, what to say of the argument? Only that if, with Pitre, we conclude that the Last Supper offers a prominent means to view the whole of Jesus's life,¹⁷⁹ then the ramifications could be large. In turn, the intent of Jesus in the Feedings of the Multitudes could shed significant light not only on the Last Supper but also the practice of the Lord's Supper in the early church. It is at this point in our discussion that I will offer a few remarks that I hope will tie the different threads in the review together.

3.6 Summarising Remarks

In this chapter, we have examined key authors' work, noting themes they raise that will be relevant to this thesis' developing argument. They are the calendar discrepancies over the timing of the Lord's Supper which relates to its possible Paschal nature; the contention over the constituent parts of early eucharistic rites, which may or may not reflect the Last Supper; the prophetic significance of Jesus's words in relation to the messianic banquet and in evoking a Moses-like

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 74-75.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 89.

¹⁷⁷ However, Atkinson does address the figure of Moses. See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 72-73.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 72, italics original.

¹⁷⁹ Pitre, *Jesus*, 1-3.

figure, who comes to feed and save his people. I hope to demonstrate that these areas of the discourse surrounding the Lord's Supper and its origins in the Last Supper are of paramount importance to the argument that is being developed.

It was argued above, by Jeremias, that although the Last Supper evoked the Passover, the Last Supper did not heavily influence the Lord's Supper during the first century. Furthermore, Bradshaw also said 'that the historical setting of the sayings or any close link with the death of Christ was not regarded as of importance in early traditions of Eucharistic thought'.¹⁸⁰ The difficulty that remains is what exactly caused the divergence in the practice of the early church from its Jewish predecessor. In other words, why did the Lord's Supper come about in the first place? A further question flows out of the first: to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord's Supper during the first century?

Evidently, this was a concern for the early church: 'cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed' (1 Cor 5.7). Because of the close association between unleavened bread and the Passover (see Exod 12.15), Garland says that 'The command to cleanse out...the old leaven assumes that the readers are familiar with the Jewish rituals associated with Passover'.¹⁸¹ If the Passover and the Last Supper did not have a strong influence on the Lord's Supper, how could Paul reasonably expect the Corinthians to know what he was referring to? Let alone hinge his argument for moral purity on their grasping of the feast.¹⁸² Perhaps this is why Dunn can say that 'the link between Jesus

¹⁸⁰ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 14-15.

¹⁸¹ David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003, 179.

¹⁸² In similar vein, while discussing 1 Corinthians 11, Bauckham says that 'While this need not entail verbatim memorization, it does entail some process of teaching

and the Passover was early on seen as important and instructive'.¹⁸³ The text in Corinthians does not stand alone: 'knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot' (1 Pet 1.18-19). What is striking to note here, as appears the case in 1 Corinthians, is that profession of this truth is expected to influence the hearers' behaviour.¹⁸⁴ In other words, it was important.¹⁸⁵ Another passage worth noting is found in the mouth of John the Baptist in the Gospel of John: 'The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1.29). Commenting on how the author would have understood the phrase, Carson says:

It is hard to imagine that he could use an expression such as "lamb of God" *without* thinking of the atoning sacrifice of his resurrected and ascended saviour... [while] He is sufficiently faithful to the ambiguity of the expression.¹⁸⁶

In a similar vein, Dunn says that 'The same tendency to run together different metaphors and descriptions of Jesus' death, thereby blurring older distinctions, is clearly evident elsewhere in the early church'.¹⁸⁷ Contrary to the opinions of Jeremias and Bradshaw respectively, while accepting that the way metaphors are taken can develop over

and learning so that what is communicated will be retained'. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 265.

¹⁸³ Dunn, *Jesus*, 773.

¹⁸⁴ See Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007, 36 and Garland, *Corinthians*, 179.

¹⁸⁵ The sacrificial death of Jesus must be taken seriously as providing insight into the very nature of God'. Green, *Peter*, 37.

¹⁸⁶ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991, 150, italics original.

¹⁸⁷ James. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998, 217.

time, it becomes clear that the Passover and Jesus' death were strongly present in the belief of Paul and the church of the first century.

Not only could this shed light on the practice of the first century, it could also provide a lens for significant early events in the life and ministry of Jesus. This would also help to refute the argument that divorces prior and subsequent practices from the Last Supper, it would also help to affirm the Jewish context of such practices in order that they become lucid.

In conclusion, we have discussed five key authors and their ideas which have helped shape the thesis. Jeremias argued that although the Last Supper was a Passover meal, the development of the Lord's Supper was not heavily influenced by the Last Supper. Marshall proposed the two-calendar theory for dating the Passover and believed that the heavenly banquet was the link between the Passover – the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper. Koenig argued that there remained a core spoken by Jesus in the institution narratives, while Bradshaw argued that the death of Jesus and the Last Supper was not a strong ethos in the first-century eucharistic practices. Pitre argued that Jesus had the Last Supper in mind during the Feeding of the Five Thousand which, if we accept, could have insightful ramifications. Finally, I argued that Jesus' death and the Passover were strongly present in the belief of the first-century church. This might provide a clue to answering the first question, 'why did the Lord's Supper come about in the first place?' In addressing the second question, 'to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord's Supper during the first century?', we would have to say 'strongly' at this junction. However, this is a partial answer and only goes so far in addressing what the title of the thesis is hinting towards.

In order to offer a more well-rounded answer, we will now have a closer examination of evidence for the heavenly banquet and the Passover. Not only do both appear intrinsically rooted in Jewish theology, if the banquet is a link between the Passover, Last Supper and The Lord's Supper then it is necessary to discuss it further when focusing on the origins and development of the latter.

4 Evidence for links between the Messianic Banquet and the Passover

While we touch on the messianic or heavenly banquet at different points throughout the thesis, it is here that it comes into focus. Before turning to the Passover exclusively, we will survey texts that help build a picture of the messianic banquet, starting with the Old Testament, pseudepigraphical writings and finally evidence in the Gospel texts.¹⁸⁸ Though different terminology may be used for the concept,¹⁸⁹ it draws attention to a body of scholarly material written on the topic. The concept of the messianic banquet appears somewhat elusive at first. Hopefully, what will become clearer as we move through the different historical texts is that the motifs of the banquet become more pronounced over time. In turn, this would play a significant part in the shaping of messianic expectations during the time of Jesus. There are two parts of this worth noting here:

First, the motifs we are referring to are a festal celebration, God's final judgement, a messiah figure, a gathering at the end of time and the ultimate establishment of God's reign. Secondly, although ideas varied, there was a widespread belief in an eschatological deliverer during the time of Jesus (Isa 9.7; Jer 23.5; *Pss. Sol.* 17.21-32; *Jos. Ant.* 18.4.1).¹⁹⁰ In a similar vein, the link between the Passover and the Lord's Supper may appear to be the messianic banquet. This should become clearer in the course of our discussion.

¹⁸⁸ I have been helped significantly in the following shape of discussion and content included by Brand Pitre, 'Jesus the Messianic Banquet and the Kingdom of God,' *Letter and Spirit Journal*, volume 5, 2009, 133-162.

¹⁸⁹ "messianic banquet". Atkinson, *Jesus*, 166; 'heavenly banquet'. Marshall, *Supper* 80; see Brand Pitre, 'Banquet', 134.

¹⁹⁰ 'The Davidic Messiah was, by any definition of the type, a future ruler ordained by God with political (not merely spiritual) rule'. Craig Keener, 'Messianic Expectation,' Yale Centre for Faith and Culture website (https://faith.yale.edu/sites/default/files/keener_expectation_0.pdf; accessed April 2019). See also Atkinson, *Jesus*, 42 n. 5.

4.1 The Old Testament

One notable passage that describes imagery common to the messianic banquet is in Isaiah 25.6-9:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained
clear.
And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death for ever.
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.
It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.¹⁹¹

This text is noticeable for a number of reasons. Firstly, the lavish imagery of food and wine which suggest a festal celebration. Secondly, the references to 'he will destroy' and 'swallow up death for ever' draw out the motifs of God's final judgement and the eschatological hope of the ultimate establishment of God's reign. 'All peoples' also alludes to a gathering at the end of time. While commenting on the theme of the messianic banquet,¹⁹² Motyer

¹⁹¹ Taken from the *Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, anglicized edn, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2011.

¹⁹² J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An introduction and commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, volume 20, Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999, 192.

describes beautifully the future-deliverance¹⁹³ anticipated by this text: 'there are innumerable ways in which we are under reproach and hindered (by circumstances as well as by sin) from living up to our true dignity as his covenant people. But, on that Day, covenant promise will be covenant reality'.¹⁹⁴ When the future-deliverance will take place, or by what means, is not clear. However, this would have evoked hope of God delivering his people from their current plight into a new reality of salvation.

Another text one could draw on is Ezekiel 39.17-20. The text depicts feasting on the corpses of Israel's opponent,¹⁹⁵ demonstrating God's final judgement. The passage is also addressed to a 'son of man' in this eschatological climate (39.17), which a reader could regard as an identifiably messianic title. It is fascinating to note that the whole of creation is invited to this festal celebration. Commenting on the imagery, Steffen remarks that 'The Jew of the first century reading Ezekiel would discover... [certain] expectations when reading about the banquet motif'.¹⁹⁶ While Steffen is right to draw our attention to the imagery, he does not appear to create a distinction between the various motifs found in the passage that together help build a picture of the messianic banquet.

So far, we have been able to note the motifs of a festal celebration, God's final judgement, a gathering at the end of time and the ultimate establishment of God's reign that reflect differently in texts discussed. This would start to help build a mosaic in the mind of first-century

¹⁹³ 'swallow up death' does indicate that this text is looking forward to a time that is beyond our present reality. See Daniel S. Steffen, 'The Messianic Banquet and the Eschatology of Matthew,' Bible.org website (<https://bible.org/article/messianic-banquet-and-eschatology-matthew>; accessed November 2018).

¹⁹⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 93.

¹⁹⁵ It also depicts birds eating the flesh and drinking the blood of those slain. One could say that it would appear bizarre to see any paschal allusion here, given the negative connotations.

¹⁹⁶ Steffen, 'Banquet'.

Jews concerning the messianic banquet. The common features involved a son of man figure and God's efficacious deliverance at the end of time. While there are other texts in the Old Testament that could be drawn on for the imagery of a banquet,¹⁹⁷ we now turn to other important documents that are closer in proximity to the first century.

4.2 The Pseudepigrapha and Qumran

The eschatological themes are drawn out strongly in passages taken from the Pseudepigrapha.¹⁹⁸ The book of 1 Enoch, dated 'between the late fourth century B. C. E. and the turn of the era',¹⁹⁹ says that 'The Lord of the Spirits will abide over them; they shall eat and rest and rise with that Son of Man forever and ever' (1 *Enoch* 62.14).²⁰⁰ This is significant for two reasons: first, it includes meals in eternity. Secondly, it refers to the 'Son of man'; a name that can be understood as a messianic title.²⁰¹ Another notable passage worth citing at length, is found in 2 Baruch:²⁰²

And those who are hungry will enjoy themselves and they will, moreover, see marvels every day. For winds will go out in front of

¹⁹⁷ Isaiah 65.13-16; Zech 9.14-17. An argument for increased banqueting allusions, see Philip J. Long, 'Messianic banquet imagery in the second temple period,' Academia.edu website (https://www.academia.edu/3683166/Messianic_Banquet_Imagery_in_the_Second_Temple_Period; accessed September 2019, 2-3). For a more cautious approach, see Blomberg, 'Jesus', 40.

¹⁹⁸ There is a consensus that the eschatological banquet theme becomes stronger in the pseudepigraphal writings, although passages in the Old Testament could be taken as references also. See Pitre, 'Banquet', 136; Blomberg, 'Jesus', 43.

¹⁹⁹ George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. Vanderkam, *1 Enoch*, The Hermeneia Translation, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012, vii.

²⁰⁰ E. Isaac, '1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch,' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, volume 1, 1983, 5-90, citing 44.

²⁰¹ Dan 7.13; Mark 13.26. See Markus Zehnder, 'Why the Danielic "Son of Man" Is a Divine Being,' *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, volume 24, 2014, 331-347, citing 332.

²⁰² Dated around the first century. See Long, 'Banquet', 6 n. 32.

me every morning to bring the fragrance of aromatic fruits and clouds at the end of the day to distil the dew of health. And it will happen at that time that the treasury of manna will come down again from on high, and they will eat of it in those years because these are they who will have arrived at the consummation of time (2 Bar. 29.6-8).²⁰³

The eschatological theme is strong in this text. Not only is there a 'consummation' meal, reference is made to the messiah in the preceding verses.²⁰⁴ Further to this, there is a consensus that the text evoked expectations in some Jews of a new Exodus.²⁰⁵ Because the whole narrative of Exodus and the Passover meal evokes God's mighty hand of deliverance from Egyptian oppression, it would be perfectly natural for some Jews to believe that the messianic banquet would be a kind of 'consummate Passover' meal or indeed a new Exodus that would permanently deliver them from their enemies. Although not emphatic, clearly they made a connection between the Exodus events, anticipation of the messianic banquet and their current existence. Fascinatingly, one may note that the new Exodus and 'manna' themes are also alluded to in the feeding miracles, which is something we will return to in the next chapter.²⁰⁶

In light of our discussion so far, there are two elements here that are worth drawing out a little further: firstly, the strengthening of a

²⁰³ A. F. J. Klijn, '2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch,' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, volume 1, 1983, 615-652, citing 630-631.

²⁰⁴ 'And it will happen that when all that which should come to pass in these parts has been accomplished, the Anointed One will begin to be revealed' (2 Bar. 29.3). Klijn, 'Apocalypse', 630. The 'Anointed One' can be taken to refer to the messiah (Psalm 28.8; Dan 9.25). See Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III (eds.), *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998, 604.

²⁰⁵ See Blomberg, 'Jesus', 39 and Long, 'Messianic', 7. This also does appear to correlate with the Gospel writers' blood of the covenant motif. See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 70.

²⁰⁶ Page 71-72.

messiah figure in the context of the messianic banquet. That may help to address the widespread belief in an eschatological deliverer during the time of Jesus as stated above. Furthermore, the Exodus narrative and the messianic banquet started to intertwine. Secondly, the eschatological manna does indicate that the Exodus took on prophetic relevance, not just historical. In other words, Jewish readers may have looked beyond a past deliverance towards a future redemptive act of God from their enemies. In light of this, Atkinson says that 'certain individuals and groups were looking for God's answer to their predicaments'.²⁰⁷

Our final text to conclude this section is found in the Qumran writings:

And [when] they shall gather for the common [tab]le, to eat and [to drink] new wine, when the common table shall be set for eating and the new wine [poured] for drinking, let no man extend his hand over the firstfruits of bread and wine before the Priest; for [it is he] who shall bless the firstfruits of bread and wine, and shall be the first [to extend] his hand over the bread. Thereafter, the Messiah of Israel shall extend his hand over the bread, [and] all the congregation of the Community [shall utter a] blessing, [each man in the order] of his dignity. It is according to this statute that they shall proceed at every me[al at which] at least ten men are gathered together (1Q28 1 ii).²⁰⁸

This text is notable for several reasons: firstly, the bread and wine parallel with the Last Supper. Secondly, it takes place around 'the common table'. Thirdly, the presence of the messiah at the meal.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 42.

²⁰⁸ Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English: Revised Edition*, London: Penguin Books, 2004.

²⁰⁹ For more on the discussion around if the text refers to one or two messiahs, see L. D. Hurst, 'Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs?,' *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, volume 9, 1999, 157-180.

While some have argued that ‘there is no concern here with “eschatological banquet” in this text,’²¹⁰ the consensus is that the context is ‘in the last days’ (1Q28 1 i).²¹¹

At this junction there are a few items worth addressing that will help inform our understanding of the messianic banquet and the Passover: first, both the messianic banquet and the Passover look back to the Exodus. Not only that, because of the eschatological focus, the messianic banquet also looks forward to a new Exodus. In light of this, it would not be unreasonable to anticipate that the Passover meal itself would be taken as foreshadowing the messianic banquet. This is clearly how the Last Supper, which the Gospel writers depicted as a Passover meal, was understood (Matt 26.28-29; Mark 14.24-25; Luke 22.16; John 14.2-3). The looking backward and forward dynamic also features in the Lord’s Supper and becomes more pronounced over time (1 Cor 11.25-26; Rev 5.9, 12; 19.9).²¹² In terms of understanding the relationship between the different meals, Marshall says:

the Lord’s Supper is linked to the Passover in that the Passover is a type of the heavenly banquet while the Lord’s Supper is the anticipation of the heavenly banquet. The middle term of comparison between the Passover and the Lord’s Supper is the heavenly banquet.²¹³

Thus, in attempting to address the Third question, ‘was the Lord’s

²¹⁰ John E. Groh, ‘The Qumran Meal and the Last Supper,’ *Concordia Theological Monthly*, volume 41, 1970, 279-295, citing 295.

²¹¹ See James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today: Second Edition*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010, 88 and F. F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, London: The Tyndale Press, 1960, 44, 50. Both writers appear to take the eschatological background for granted.

²¹² For a discussion around how the book of revelation denotes Jesus as ‘the Lamb’, see Donald Guthrie, ‘The Lamb in The Structure of the Book of Revelation,’ *Vox Evangelica*, volume 12, 1981, 64-71, citing 69.

²¹³ Marshall, *Supper*, 80.

Supper affected by evocations of Jewish celebrations?’ one could answer affirmatively at this stage. However, a fuller address is required. Let us examine the New Testament descriptions of the messianic banquet more closely.

4.3 The Gospels

When we turn to the pages of the New Testament, we will note a commonality between the way the messianic banquet is pictured in the texts we have discussed so far and the Gospel writings.²¹⁴ In order to do this, we narrow our focus on a few case studies. The first text is found in Matthew 8.5-13,²¹⁵ the account of the Centurion:

Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 8.10-12).

The first commonality is that the text appears to envisage the salvation of Gentiles;²¹⁶ an idea already clear in Isaiah 25 as mentioned earlier in the chapter.²¹⁷ However, it has been argued that texts which indicated Gentiles attending the messianic banquet were taken as referring to a re-gathering of ethnic Jews during the

²¹⁴ See Steffen, ‘Banquet’.

²¹⁵ Although Luke 13.28-29 does appear to have similarities to the Matthean text cited, suggesting Q material, ‘the differences in the imagery actually suggest that independence of sources is most likely’. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, volume 2, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994, 1230-1231. See also Pitre, ‘Banquet’, 141.

²¹⁶ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007, 317-318.

²¹⁷ That appears the consensus. See Pitre, ‘Banquet’, 136 and Steffen, ‘Banquet’, Bible.org website.

intertestamental period.²¹⁸ The second commonality: an eschatological feast is in view as appeared the case in 2 Baruch cited above. Not only is this suggested by the use of the phrase ‘the kingdom of heaven’, it is also endorsed by the patriarchs attending the meal.²¹⁹ Perhaps this is also further enhanced by the ‘weeping and gnashing’ motif, taken as indicating the final judgement of God motif.²²⁰ The next text we will focus on is Matthew 22:

Then he said to his servants, “The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.” And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests (Matt 22.8-10).

Although there are similarities between the Matthean text and Luke 14, the consensus is that the two are different occasions.²²¹ One could treat the texts as thematic variants.²²² That being said, ‘the story’s thrust in each represents a common theme in Jesus’ teachings in general, and he may have told more than one story about a custom as common as invitations to a banquet’.²²³ There are a few observations one can draw on: firstly, the meal is eschatological. The parable is set in the final week of the life of Jesus,²²⁴ this would add a certain eschatological charge. Not only that, the context is ‘The kingdom of

²¹⁸ See France, *Matthew*, 318.

²¹⁹ France, *Matthew*, 317.

²²⁰ See Zoltan L Erdey and Kevin G Smith, ‘Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth: the Nature of the Suffering of the Wicked in Matthew,’ South African Theological Seminary website (<https://www.sats.edu.za/weeping-gnashing-teeth/>; accessed December 2018).

²²¹ Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, 517-518 and Robert H. Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981, 83.

²²² See Keener, *Commentary*, 517 n. 175.

²²³ Keener, *Commentary*, 517.

²²⁴ See Matt 21.1. Keener, *Commentary*, 518.

heaven' (Matt 22.2). This is further enhanced by the 'weeping and gnashing of teeth'.²²⁵ Matthew places a conversation regarding 'the resurrection' shortly after (Matt 22.30) and the variant in Luke explicitly refers to 'the resurrection of the righteous' in the context of banqueting (Luke 14.14). Secondly, the inclusivity. The scope of the banquet includes the outcasts of society, specifically 'the poor and crippled and blind and lame' in Luke (14.21).

There is debate as to whether or not the text envisages the inclusion of Gentiles. The argument follows that while the text includes the estranged of the land being invited along to the meal, the attendees are Jewish as the locality is nearby.²²⁶ While that may appear convincing, there is a scholarly consensus also that the text has a wider application than ethnic Jews.²²⁷ There are at least two good reasons to suggest the latter idea has a strong grounding. Firstly, the inclusion of Gentiles appeared to be the indication of the text in Isaiah noted above. Secondly, one could build a supporting argument from other instances in the life of Jesus.

After having discussed many occasions where Jesus condemns claims made to spiritual superiority based on ethnicity alone, Wright says that 'Israel's boundaries were thus radically redrawn by Jesus, so as to include those who "repented" according to his own redefinition, but to exclude those who did not'.²²⁸

²²⁵ Matt 22.13. Perhaps it would also be ratified further if the reference to 'outer darkness' were taken literally as that might indicate quite a lengthy delay before partaking. See Keener, *Commentary*, 521.

²²⁶ Turner appears to assume that those attending were Jewish. David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008, 523. See also Keener, *Commentary*, 521.

²²⁷ See Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002, 345; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, second edition, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994, 438; Pitre, 'Banquet', 142.

²²⁸ Wright, *Jesus*, 329.

Although one could legitimately question Wright's notion of a reconstructed Israel,²²⁹ it does highlight that Jesus' use of the parable indicated that the implications of the messianic banquet extended beyond the realms of what his audience might have anticipated.²³⁰ Not only are the religious elite his intended audience (Matt 21.45; Luke 14.1), the attendees are not those who first heard of the meal and could be described as undesirable guests (Matt 22.9-10; Luke 14.22-24). This appears to strengthen the argument for Gentile inclusion.²³¹ This also appears to correlate with our discussion above around Matthew 8. To summarise our findings so far, we could say that motifs of the messianic banquet appear quite strong, not only in Jewish literature but also in the mind of Jesus.²³² It is fascinating that such motifs could have been a regular feature in his teaching also.

However, there is another aspect to discuss in relation to the texts: Greco-Roman symposia. Smith says that:

Meal traditions in the ancient world are most commonly associated with the institution of the symposium. The symposium as a social institution was, of course, the second course of the traditional banquet, or the drinking party that followed the meal proper. It was during the drinking party that the entertainment of the evening was traditionally presented. In the philosophical tradition, this tended to

²²⁹ See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 54.

²³⁰ Although Wright appears to focus on Luke, I would suggest that the parallels found between the variant stories in Matthew and Luke are strong enough that they apply to both Gospels; probably reflecting the intent of the historical Jesus.

²³¹ Although perhaps the Matthean text is less clear than Luke regarding how far the servant travelled, the inclusion of the 'good, the bad and the ugly', if you will, in Matthew's text may also indicate Gentiles. The fact that one guest was denied omission on the basis of dress may strengthen the idea that any criteria for attendance, such as ethnicity, has changed (Matt 22.11-14).

²³² 'In short, when Jesus described the future it was often in terms of table fellowship'. Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, 152.

consist of elevated conversation on a topic of interest to all in the group.²³³

It has been argued that such a background is reflected in the text of Luke 14.²³⁴ While it might be regarded as injudicious to discount Hellenised influences on meal etiquette altogether,²³⁵ there are a few observations worth noting. Firstly, accounts of symposium differ:

The symposium is an organization of all-male groups, aristocratic and egalitarian at the same time, which affirm their identity through ceremonial drinking. Prolonged drinking is separate from the meal proper; there is wine mixed in a krater for equal distribution; the participants, adorned with wreaths, lie on couches. The symposium has private, political, and cultural dimensions: it is the place of *euphrosyne*, of music, poetry, and other forms of entertainment; it is bound up with sexuality, especially homosexuality; it guarantees the social control of the *polis* by the aristocrats. It is a dominating social form in Greek civilization from Homer onward and well beyond the Hellenistic period.²³⁶

Granted, expressions of the symposium may have varied regionally,²³⁷ but it is hard to imagine why the Gospel writers would attempt to situate Jesus' teaching in a context that could be regarded by his Jewish contemporaries as lacking credibility.²³⁸ Secondly, even

²³³ Dennis E. Smith, 'Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, volume 106, 1987, 613-638, citing 614.

²³⁴ Smith, 'Table', 618-619.

²³⁵ See Marshall, *Supper*, 27.

²³⁶ Walter Burkert, 'Oriental Symposia: Contrasts and Parallels,' in William J. Slater (ed.), *Dining in a Classical Context*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991, 7-24, citing 7, italics original.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ For discussion around Jewish expectation of ritual purity, see John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001, citing 17-18.

if the Gospels did bear the hallmarks of pagan influences, such as might appear the case in 1 Corinthians, it is hardly shown in a positive light.²³⁹ Thirdly, it has been noted that there is uncertainty in the dating of the sources used in support of the symposia tradition.²⁴⁰

Finally, it has been argued valiantly by Blomberg that there is nothing that suggests symposia parallels in Luke 14, that cannot similarly be drawn from Judaic practices also.²⁴¹ Furthermore, a hierarchical social structure, such as the symposium, would appear at odds with Jesus' intended meaning for the parable (Luke 14.21-24).²⁴² The arguments here should, at the very least, create a sense of caution before presuming a symposium background.²⁴³

In summary, our reading of the New Testament evidence affirmed a widespread belief in both a festal celebration, a gathering at the end of time and a messiah figure. Not only did Jesus endorse the eschatological expectations around the messianic banquet, he appears to utilize them to explain the nature of his ministry. Regardless of eternal influences, Jesus statements around banqueting are best understood against a Jewish backdrop; particularly in light of his *initial* audience. Let us now discuss what the Passover was like in the first century and if there are peculiarities regarding Passover that we would have to address before moving towards any links that there might be.

²³⁹ 'It emerges that the pagan background has nothing to do with the origins of the Lord's Supper'. Marshall, *Supper*, 29.

²⁴⁰ 'Many aspects of contemporary Greco-Roman dining practices, however, remain frustratingly obscure due to the nature of our sources, which are not only fragmentary and elitist but cover a very wide geographical and temporal range'. Blake Leyerle, 'Meal Customs in the Greco-Roman World,' in Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence a. Hoffman (eds.), *Passover and Easter: Origin and History to Modern Times*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999, 29-61, citing 29.

²⁴¹ Blomberg, 'Jesus', 60.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ This may also help to ensure that Jesus is correctly and faithfully read in his Jewish context. See Koenig, *Testament*, 15.

4.4 Passover in the first century

There appears a consensus that, during the first-century,²⁴⁴ the Passover was an annual celebration that fell in the month of Nisan.²⁴⁵ While there appears to be a discrepancy between the synoptic Gospels and John as to whether the Passover fell on the 14th or 15th,²⁴⁶ there are different perspectives on how best to settle the argument.²⁴⁷ Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, does discuss the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the context of the Passover.²⁴⁸ The fact that Josephus distinguishes the Feast of Unleavened Bread from the Passover but acknowledges the integration of the two may refute the argument that the feasts were combined after the reform of Josias.²⁴⁹ In our discussion so far, the placement of either celebration has not been discussed in depth. There is strong evidence to indicate that Jerusalem functioned as the focal centre of worship. Admittedly, this does not necessitate a temple cult and a sacrificial system. However, the existence of a pilgrimage to offer sacrifices at the Jerusalem temple indicates its cult status. Josephus records 'two hundred and fifty-six thousand five hundred'²⁵⁰ sacrifices slain by the high priests (J.W.

²⁴⁴ Although study of the origins of Passover is fascinating, the focus of my thesis is the first century. For helpful studies in festal origins, see Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985 and C. E. Armerding, 'Festivals and Feasts,' in T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003, 300-313. For insightful commentaries regarding the origins of the Pentateuch, see William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19-40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 2006; Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, Word Biblical Commentary, volume 6a, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001 and Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. For useful discussions around etymology and the appropriate interpretation of language, see James Barr, *the Semantics of Biblical Language*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004.

²⁴⁵ Marshall, *Supper*, 21; Segal, *Hebrew*, 233.

²⁴⁶ Instone-Brewer, 'Passover', 122.

²⁴⁷ Marcus, 'Passover', 303-304; Jeremias, *Words*, 20-21.

²⁴⁸ Ralph Marcus (tr.), *Josephus 7: Jewish Antiquities*, London: William Heinemann, 1943, 459.

²⁴⁹ De Vaux, *Israel*, 488.

²⁵⁰ Whiston, *Works*, 906.

6.9.3) and three million Jews at Jerusalem during the Passover in 65 CE (J.W. 2.14.3).²⁵¹ The pilgrimage of Jews to celebrate at Jerusalem is also recorded in the New Testament (John 11.55-56; Mark 14.12-13; Acts 2.1, 5-11).²⁵² What is difficult to address is the existence of a leisurely Passover meal alongside temple practice in the first century.

4.4.1 *Alleged non-existence*

Because of the existence of a temple cult aspect to Passover and that the Passover looked towards Jerusalem as previously noted,²⁵³ it is argued that the Passover only functioned in the context of the temple in the first-century.²⁵⁴ Thus, the depicted leisurely Passover meal in the New Testament is the result of a later Passover Seder after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.²⁵⁵ The argument follows that if the sacrifice of the lamb for Passover centred around the temple before 70 CE,²⁵⁶ then the Passover Seder²⁵⁷ only developed as a replacement for Passover sacrifice after the destruction of the temple.²⁵⁸ This would mean that while the synoptic accounts depict Jesus as partaking of a Passover Seder, clearly that could not be the case because the Seder itself did not exist at the time of Jesus. We will now indicate how a contrary argument can be assembled. I am indebted to Marcus for many of the points here.

²⁵¹ For the date and a defence of the numbers, see *ibid*, 751 n. 2. For a lower number, see Marshall, *Supper*, 23.

²⁵² While the event depicted in Mark and the other synoptic Gospels is disputed, Marshall considers the event as historically justifiable. Marshall, *Supper*, 168 n. 1.

²⁵³ Page 13.

²⁵⁴ Segal, *Hebrew*, 241.

²⁵⁵ Marcus, 'Passover', 306.

²⁵⁶ See *ibid*, 304.

²⁵⁷ Fixed order of service. *Ibid*, 303.

²⁵⁸ See Joseph Tabory, 'Towards a History of the Paschal Meal,' in Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence a. Hoffman (eds.), *Passover and Easter: Origin and History to Modern Times*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999, 62-80, citing 62-63.

Marcus produces a strong argument for the existence of a pre-70 Passover Seder, drawing from early sources including the New Testament documents.²⁵⁹ The first evidence offered is the book of Jubilees, a second-century BCE writing that depicts the Passover as a leisurely meal (*Jub.* 49.6).²⁶⁰ Followed shortly after are the writings of Philo, an early first-century philosopher who describes the Passover taken as a domestic meal²⁶¹ and who offers an interpretation of the matzah and the bitter herbs found in Exodus (*QE* 1.15).²⁶² The interpretation found here parallels the haggadah²⁶³ and the kind of interpretation given to the bread and wine by Jesus.²⁶⁴ From a combination of this evidence, Marcus argues that a pre-70 Passover Seder existed at the time of Jesus, and thus the meal depicted in the synoptic accounts is an accurate reflection.²⁶⁵ While Marcus' delivery is weak in places,²⁶⁶ there appears no reason to doubt the evidence. It is highly probable that the Last Supper of Jesus was a pre-70 Passover Seder.

We have already noted the words of interpretation over the unleavened bread and bitter herbs by Philo and over the bread and wine recorded in the synoptic Gospels. This is integral to our argument as the haggadah is a core part of the Passover Seder.²⁶⁷ Wallace astutely notes the striking similarity between the haggadah and the speech of Stephen (Acts 7.2-38).²⁶⁸ It is suggested that this

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 303.

²⁶⁰ Page 12.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 309.

²⁶² Page 12.

²⁶³ A retelling of the Exodus events bound in literary form. Marcus, 'Passover', 310.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 314-315.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 317-318.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 323-324.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 307.

²⁶⁸ Wallace, 'Passover'.

could be the haggadah that Stephen would have recited with his family at the Passover.²⁶⁹ While unfortunately we do not have any confirmation if that was in fact the case, the evidence is very suggestive. In respect to the argument that the Passover only functioned in the context of the temple, along with the evidence that supports the existence of a haggadah in the first century, we offer two objections.

Firstly, doubt was expressed as to what extent the text of Exodus 12 informed the Passover practice of the first century – as noted in an earlier chapter²⁷⁰ – and the same could be said of Old Testament texts that restrict Passover practice to the temple.²⁷¹ If anything, the Exodus text seems to prohibit the Passover taking place anywhere but in the house (Exod 12.22). The fact that meals outside of the temple took place is attested to by Philo and the synoptics.²⁷² Admittedly, the text cited by Philo condemns the eating of meat and drinking of wine but *Jubilees* prohibits partaking of the Passover outside of the temple altogether (*Jub.* 49.21). The drinking of wine at the Passover in the book of *Jubilees* has been noted elsewhere.²⁷³ Furthermore, Philo could be read as simply warning the partakers not to treat the Passover disrespectfully by overindulging in meat and wine²⁷⁴ as was common in the Greco-Roman world. Perhaps this resonates with the exclusivity of Jewish religion.²⁷⁵ From this we could conclude that there was a variety of Jewish practice in the first-century, that does not exclude the possibility of a domestic meal outside of the temple.²⁷⁶ Secondly,

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Page 10-11.

²⁷¹ Marcus, 'Passover', 305.

²⁷² *Spec.* 2.148; Matt 26.17; Mark 14.12; Luke 22.8-9.

²⁷³ Page 12.

²⁷⁴ Hurtado, *Origins*, 26.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 29.

²⁷⁶ It should be noted that the Passover meal of Exodus 12 is depicted as such.

in respect to the later Seder in the New Testament, the synoptic Gospels are 'rooted in pre-70 traditions'.²⁷⁷

In light of the discussion so far, one can argue that a leisurely Passover meal did exist during the time of Jesus. Therefore, the Gospel accounts are broadly correct in what they portray. What is striking to note is that although the Qumran meal incorporated bread and wine, the specific way that Jesus interpreted the elements is quite extraordinary.²⁷⁸ While clearly evocative of the messianic banquet at Qumran explored above in that they share the motifs of a messiah figure, a festal celebration and a gathering at the end of time, it might also indicate that Jesus seized the opportunity at the Passover to reveal his true identity and prophesy the unique purpose of his death. Either way, the existence of a Seder testifies to the intertwining of the messianic banquet and the Passover in terms of motifs in the first century.²⁷⁹

Before we discuss any messianic, eschatological or soteriological significance that Jesus may have invested into the Last Supper, it would be helpful to address the textual difficulties around the timing of the meal itself in conjunction with the Passover.

²⁷⁷ Marcus, 'Passover', 313.

²⁷⁸ See Marcus, 'Passover', 314. In light of this, Hurtado says, regarding the Lord's Supper, that 'once again we have indication of the reshaping of monotheistic devotion involved in early Christianity and another example of a devotional innovation for which we do not have a parallel in Jewish groups of the time. Common meals, yes, as at Qumran. But meals devoted expressly to celebrating and perhaps communing with God's heavenly "chief agent" are not found in the records of ancient Jewish devotion'. Hurtado, *God*, 111-112.

²⁷⁹ Thus Wright can say that 'like all Jewish Passover meals, the event spoke of leaving Egypt. To a first-century Jew, it pointed to the return from exile, the new exodus, the great covenant renewal spoken of by the prophets. The meal symbolized "forgiveness of sins", YHWH's return to redeem his people, his victory over Pharaohs, both literal and metaphorical; it took place "in accordance with the scriptures", locating itself within the ongoing story of YHWH's strange saving purposes for Israel as they reached its climax. This was the meal, in other words, which said that Israel's god was about to become king. This, indeed, is not especially controversial'. Wright, *Jesus*, 557.

4.4.2 Claimed discrepancies in timing

While perhaps the link between the Last Supper and Passover might appear blatant,²⁸⁰ there are differing factors in the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper that lead certain scholars to conclude that the meal depicted is not, in the truest sense, a Passover meal.

Bond argues such a case, claiming that there is nothing that necessitates a Passover meal in the Markan account because there is an apparent lack of 'reference to the lamb, to the bitter herbs, or to the recitation of the Exodus story'.²⁸¹ Bond is technically right in that the text is not explicit in terms of content. However, this may simply indicate that the Passover setting and the elements incorporated would have been assumed by the readership. Bond's argument also places a great weight on the unreliability of the Markan account. Suffice to say, that many of the difficulties are resolved adequately by Marshall.²⁸² Furthermore, the Gospel accounts corroborate evidence of the existence of a pre-70 Passover Seder as already discussed above. Aspects of the meal come through in varying degrees in the different accounts.²⁸³ Therefore, the argument *against* Jesus' meal being a Passover Seder appears unlikely.²⁸⁴ However, Bond is primarily

²⁸⁰ Marshall, *Supper*, 57.

²⁸¹ Bond, 'Death', 467.

²⁸² Marshall, *Supper*, 62-66. Bond does refer to Jeremias who Marshall builds on heavily in advancing his argument. However, there appears very little rebuttal of the arguments posed by Jeremias other than to comment that it was 'not in my view entirely successful'. Bond, 'Death', 467 n. 28.

²⁸³ Matt 26.17, 23, 26-27, 30; Mark 14.12, 20, 22-23, 26; Luke 22.7, 21, 26 19-20; John 13.26, 14-15. For a helpful discussion, see Jonathan Went, 'Passover, Last Supper and Eucharist,' leaderu.com website (<http://www.leaderu.com/theology/passover.html>; accessed March 2019). It is strange that Bond does not discuss how well the criteria of multiple attestation applies here. Not only that, the similarity of focus between Matt 26.1-2 and Luke 22.15. Arguably, one could concede this as Q material even if, along with bond, one regards Mark 14.1 as a redaction. Bond, 'Death', 467.

²⁸⁴ Hence Jewish scholar Lawrence Hoffman says that 'the Last Supper is definitely a *seder*, where bread (*matzah*) is Jesus' body, and Jesus' body, in turn, is the Paschal Lamb'. Lawrence A. Hoffman, 'A Symbol of Salvation in the Passover Haggadah,' *Worship*, volume 53, 1979, 519-537, citing 526.

concerned with the Passover day itself. Because of apparent discrepancies between the Johannine and Markan accounts of when the meal took place (Mark 14.12; John 19.14),²⁸⁵ Bond argues that Jesus' death happened 'perhaps up to a week' before Passover.²⁸⁶ In other words, the distance of time from the Last Supper to the Passover should be held loosely.

There are a number of aspects in the argument that one could agree with. For example, highlighting the differences between John's chronology of Holy Week and the synoptics.²⁸⁷ Bond is also right to point out the weaknesses inherent in particular arguments that attempt to make the accounts compatible.²⁸⁸ Whatever position one takes in this debate, it has to be readily admitted that it is a difficult problem to reconcile. However, her argument does not engage with Billerbeck, who could be regarded as making the strongest case for an existing harmony between the Gospel accounts. This view has been propagated by a few notable scholars.²⁸⁹ Billerbeck argues that at the time of the crucifixion, there was a discrepancy between two groups of Jews concerning the day that the Passover fell; as a result of counting the days of the months differently.²⁹⁰ Billerbeck discusses other circumstances where this kind of disagreement occurred, and thus strengthens the argument considerably.²⁹¹ The result would be that while both John and Mark depict Jesus as presiding over a Passover meal, the two accounts are working from different

²⁸⁵ Bond, 'Death', 467.

²⁸⁶ Ibid, 475.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 470.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 463. However, there are others who advocate a revision of Annie Jaubert's original theory. See Stephane Saulnier, *Calendrical Variations in Second Temple Judaism: New Perspectives on the Date of the Last Supper Debate*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, volume 159, Leiden: Brill, 2012.

²⁸⁹ See Instone-Brewer, 'Passover', 123; Marshall, *Supper*, 74 and Wilson, *Father*, 123.

²⁹⁰ See Marshall, *Supper*, 71.

²⁹¹ Ibid, 72.

calendars.²⁹² Jeremias says concerning the argument that ‘This theory has been so thoroughly and carefully argued, especially by Billerbeck, that its possibility has to be admitted’.²⁹³

It is unfortunate that Bond does not engage the argument of Billerbeck which appears to have a certain strength. It would also mean that the incompatibility of the synoptics and John is not a foregone conclusion. Both accounts would be correct in what they detail, and Jesus could have certainly held a Passover meal with his disciples prior to his death. Additionally, Bond’s argument seems artificial if one draws out the implications. For example, if one were to remove the unique aspects of the Passover from the Last Supper, it would prove difficult to suggest that it had any more significance than a typical Jewish meal other than the fact that Jesus died shortly after. This appears troubling when the question is posed as to why the memory of this meal didn’t simply fade into obscurity after the resurrection? Surely the resurrection would have been a more fitting emblem to remember Jesus in the fellowship meals of the early church.²⁹⁴ Why the instance on recalling this occasion? If one were to retort, ‘because Jesus instructed the disciples to do so’ then that also begs the question why.

Speaking of bread and wine as his body and blood, although radical, would be perfectly intelligible in the context of the Passover haggadah as outlined above.²⁹⁵ However, it would appear quite strange in a standard meal context. Marshall notes that the cup is bestowed as blessed and not the content thereof.²⁹⁶ Furthermore, Bradshaw argues that the use of wine should not ‘be assumed in every instance’ and

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Jeremias, *Words*, 23.

²⁹⁴ Of course, this does not necessitate that they were mutually exclusive. Marshall, *Supper*, 131-133.

²⁹⁵ Hoffman argues that the bread itself would have been understood as symbolic of salvation during the time of Jesus. See Hoffman, ‘Symbol’, 536.

²⁹⁶ Marshall, *Supper*, 114.

that it was common in the wider Greco-Roman society to dilute wine with water.²⁹⁷ While that may be true, there are grounds to support that wine was drunk at the Last Supper. Aside from the possible metaphor of blood and wine,²⁹⁸ the synoptic Gospels do point to the use of wine.²⁹⁹ While the use of water and wine together is also possible,³⁰⁰ either way wine in the context of the Passover does appear likely. Bond's argument also appears to diminish the possibility that Jesus deliberately shaped his death around the timing of the Passover. If Jesus had prior knowledge of his death and did intend to share a final Passover meal with his disciples (Luke 22.15), why would he not have attempted to adhere to the fixed timing(s) of the festival (Luke 22.7-13; Mark 14.12-15)? If the Passover setting reflected the intention of the historical Jesus, this would help to explain why the connection to Jesus' death and the Passover lamb was made so early on, and how it continued to feature as a recurrent theme in Christian devotion.³⁰¹

Therefore, we can say that Jesus intended to share a Passover meal with his disciples at the proper time, in order to indicate the character of his imminent death and how it was to be correctly understood.³⁰² No doubt, building on the intertwined motifs in the messianic banquet and the Passover as both looked forward to a new Exodus. We will now discuss the significance attached by Jesus at the Last Supper to this eschatological meal.

²⁹⁷ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 53, 43.

²⁹⁸ Segal, *Hebrew*, 231.

²⁹⁹ Matt 26.29; Mark 14.25; Luke 22.18.

³⁰⁰ Instone-Brewer, *Feasts*, 176.

³⁰¹ Hurtado, *God*, 111.

³⁰² Atkinson, *Jesus*, 72.

4.2.3 *The messianic banquet and the Last Supper*

It has been argued that Jesus evoked messianic, eschatological expectation at the Last Supper.³⁰³ There appears a consensus that the Passover in the first-century evoked ‘the future redemption of Israel from its sorry plight at the coming of the Messiah’.³⁰⁴ Although nearly all of our findings thus far would incline us to agree with the conclusions of both Jeremias and Marshall, the evidence they cite to support their claim is somewhat tentative.³⁰⁵

While Jeremias does cite a prayer which could trace back to the time of Jesus,³⁰⁶ there is uncertainty as to its date.³⁰⁷ Although a rendition of Psalm 118 probably heightened messianic expectation,³⁰⁸ the Gospels are silent as to precisely what hymn is sung.³⁰⁹ That being said, the text may not specify what hymn exactly because the practice was already firmly established.³¹⁰ It would also fit perfectly in the context of the Passover meal as the Psalm appears to have been interpreted as messianic (Matt 21.42; Mark 12.10-11; Luke 20.17).³¹¹ Once again, Jesus seems here to have utilized the eschatological expectations around the messianic banquet to explain the nature of his ministry. Our critique of Marshall and Jeremias’ argument is not in what they affirm but rather in what they omit. For example: although Marshall cites evidence in the Pseudepigrapha (1 *Enoch* 62.14; 2 *Bar.*

³⁰³ Marshall, *Supper*, 80.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 77-78. See also Jeremias, *Words*, 252.

³⁰⁵ Marshall himself actually says that ‘the Jewish evidence for this hope must be evaluated with some caution’. Marshall, *Supper*, 79.

³⁰⁶ Jeremias, *Words*, 252.

³⁰⁷ Marshall, *Supper*, 78.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*.

³⁰⁹ Marcus, ‘Passover’, 314 n. 44.

³¹⁰ It has been asserted that the hymn ‘would have been the completion of the *Hallel* Psalms’. Instone-Brewer, *Feasts*, 188.

³¹¹ Michael G. Mckelvey, ‘The Messianic Nature of Psalm 118,’ *The Journal of Reformed Theological Seminary*, volume 2, 2017, 44-55.

29.8),³¹² he does not discuss evidence in the writings of Qumran in conjunction with the messianic banquet (1Q28 1 ii).³¹³ This is crucial as it provides a striking contrast with Jesus' interpretation of the bread and wine as discussed earlier in the chapter.

There is evidence that the Last Supper as a Passover meal prefigured the messianic banquet. Not only that, Jesus endorsed the eschatological expectations around the messianic banquet and utilized them to explain the nature of his ministry. Considering this, Smith says that 'Jesus' presentation of himself as host/servant at the Last Supper is thus seen as prefiguring his role as host/servant at the messianic banquet. This of course correlates quite well the eschatological emphasis presented in the Last Supper pericope as a whole'.³¹⁴ It does appear that Jesus may have been fully aware of evoking the motif of a messiah figure. Luke records Jesus at the Last Supper as saying that:

The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves (Luke 22.25-27).

John also records Jesus, after having washed the disciples feet, as saying, 'Truly, truly, I say to you a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him' (John

³¹² Marshall, *Supper*, 169 n. 7.

³¹³ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 166 n. 45. Page 46.

³¹⁴ Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003, 266.

13.16).³¹⁵ The statements here are significant for at least two reasons: first, reference to “kings”. Not only does the Last Supper have the required amount of people attending such a meal according to Qumran, it also shares the potential messiah figure in Jesus. At the outset of this chapter we noted that there was widespread belief in an eschatological deliverer during the time of Jesus. In view of this, Keener says that ‘The Davidic Messiah was, by any definition of the type, a future ruler ordained by God with political (not merely spiritual) rule’.³¹⁶ If there was the hope during the time of Jesus of political deliverance then what Jesus is saying here is evocative. By Jesus saying, ‘But I am among you as the one who serves’, it implies that he is also ‘the greatest’ and has kingly status.

Secondly, Jesus’ taking on of a servant persona may in fact allude to the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.³¹⁷ This could be implied by Mark 14.24 and Luke 22.37.³¹⁸ That being said, the evidence does appear a little slim. However, we do know that Jesus’ wider ministry and self-understanding were influenced by the book of Isaiah (Luke 4.16-20).³¹⁹ Therefore, in light of his impending death, one could say that Jesus had Isaiah 53 in mind.³²⁰ Jesus functioning as servant king at the Last Supper would not only have been acknowledged by later disciples, Jesus may have intended his actions to be understood in such a way.

Another way Jesus may have evoked the messianic banquet is when he says, ‘Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the

³¹⁵ I would regard this as fulfilling the criteria of multiple attestation. See Stein, ‘Criteria’, 230.

³¹⁶ Keener, ‘Expectation’.

³¹⁷ See Marshall, *Supper*, 89.

³¹⁸ Moyise, ‘Jesus’, 260.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, 267.

³²⁰ Marshall, *Supper*, 89.

vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God' (Mark 14.25; Matt 26.29; Luke 22.18). So far we have seen that Jesus evoked the motif of a messiah figure. Now he also indicates, through the drinking of wine, a festal celebration and the ultimate establishment of God's reign. In light of this, McKnight says that 'Thus, Jesus connects the last supper with the eschatological banquet'.³²¹ The findings here are starting to build a strong case towards the idea that Jesus utilized the eschatological expectations around the messianic banquet to explain the nature of his ministry. Furthermore, he intended to share a Passover meal with his disciples at the proper time in order to indicate the character of his imminent death and how it was to be correctly understood. Further discussion is required for this latter point to be seen more clearly.

Another way Jesus evoked motifs of the messianic banquet is found in his description of the cup as the 'blood of the [new] covenant' (Matt 26.28; Mark 14.24; Luke 22.20). There is a scholarly consensus that this is reminiscent of the 'new covenant' and forgiveness promised in Jeremiah (31.31-34) and 'the blood of the covenant' in Exodus (24.8).³²² What is significant for our purpose is that in the latter text, it records shortly after that 'Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel...beheld God, and ate and drank' (24.9-11).³²³ Bearing in mind our earlier discussion of eschatological hopes of a new Exodus, it is hard not to see Jesus' statement as igniting such beliefs:

Passover looked back to the exodus and on to the coming of the kingdom. Jesus intended this meal to symbolize the new exodus, the

³²¹ Scot McKnight, *Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory*, Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005, 331.

³²² See Marshall, *Supper*, 91-93; Carter, *Forgiveness*, 195-196. See also Atkinson, *Jesus*, 70.

³²³ 'From his [Jesus] point of view, the visionary meal hosted by God for Moses and Israel's elders offered a preview of the kingdom banquet'. Koenig, *Feast*, 39.

arrival of the kingdom through his own fate. The meal, focused on Jesus' actions, with the bread and cup, told the Passover story, and Jesus' own story, and wove these two into one.³²⁴

This might also be supported by Jesus being referred to as 'our Passover lamb' (1 Cor 5.7). A startling claim that appears to have developed early on in Christianity.³²⁵ In John's chronology, Jesus dies at the time when the lambs are being prepared for the Passover sacrifice (John 19.31).³²⁶ Earlier in the chapter we discussed that although the Passover lamb was not referred to explicitly, the context of the Last Supper as a Passover Seder implies its presence. Evidently, Jesus as the Passover lamb was important to the early church as noted earlier.³²⁷ John also reflects this understanding by referring to instances in the Old Testament where those partaking of the meal are instructed concerning the lamb, 'not [to] break any of its bones' (Exod 12.46; Num 9.12; John 19.36).³²⁸ The strength of the argument is found in how defined are the early statements of Jesus as the paschal lamb (1 Cor 5.7) and how articulate are the later expressions (Rev 22.1-5). All of our findings here support that Jesus did evoke eschatological expectations. Not only did the messianic banquet and the Passover both look forward to a new Exodus, the lamb was the centrepiece of the original Exodus. While utilizing such expectations to explain the nature of his ministry, Jesus also intended to share a Passover meal

³²⁴ Wright, *Jesus*, 559.

³²⁵ Page 37. For a helpful timeline of events, which also dates 1 Corinthians between 54-55 CE, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, volume 7, London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2018, 4.

³²⁶ For a discussion of arguments attempting to harmonise John's account with the synoptics, see Marshall, *Supper*, 68-70.

³²⁷ Page 37-38. For a wider discussion of the Lord's Supper in different New Testament texts, see Marshall, *Supper*, 107-140.

³²⁸ For a further discussion of possible allusions contained in the verse in John, particularly Psalm 34.20, see Gaylin R. Schmeling, 'Psalm 34:15-22: Is this Messianic and How does it Apply to Us?', Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Website (<http://www.blts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/GRS-Psalm-34.pdf>; accessed August 2019, 5).

with his disciples in order to indicate the character of his imminent death and how it was to be correctly understood. It would transpire in time that Jesus was 'the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world' (Rev 13.8 NIV).

Earlier in the chapter, we cited Marshall as saying:

the Lord's Supper is linked to the Passover in that the Passover is a type of the heavenly banquet while the Lord's Supper is the anticipation of the heavenly banquet. The middle term of comparison between the Passover and the Lord's Supper is the heavenly banquet.³²⁹

The evidence explored in this chapter suggested that the Passover and the messianic banquet became intertwined through the use of common motifs – identified as a festal celebration, God's final judgement, a messiah figure, a gathering at the end of time and the ultimate establishment of God's reign – and both looked forward to a new Exodus. Our discussion of the New Testament and the Last Supper also confirmed that to be the case. However, there is also another link: earlier in the chapter, Wright said that 'The [Last Supper] meal, focused on Jesus' actions, with the bread and cup, told the Passover story, and Jesus' own story, and wove these two into one'.³³⁰ It appears that at the Last Supper, Jesus established a link between the Passover, the messianic banquet and the Last Supper through the prediction of his death. This might help explain why the looking backward and forward dynamic also featured in the Lord's Supper. Instead of looking back to the Exodus events, they would now recall the ultimate sacrifice of this new Passover lamb, the motifs

³²⁹ Marshall, *Supper*, 80.

³³⁰ Wright, *Jesus*, 559.

taken over into the exaltation of Jesus.³³¹

Returning to our research questions, our answer to ‘are the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord’s Supper linked through the death of Jesus?’ would be affirmative. One might also expect the answer to ‘why did the Lord’s Supper come about in the first place?’ to be ‘because of the death of Jesus’. The chapter also hints at answers to ‘was the Lord’s Supper affected by evocations of Jewish celebrations?’ and ‘to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord’s Supper during the first century?’ but further discussion of the *ethos* and *practice* of the Lord’s Supper is required, which will be addressed in chapter six. However, there is one outstanding query from our findings here: it was noted earlier that the new Exodus and manna themes are also alluded to in the feeding miracles. Although the new Exodus and paschal lamb were discussed, the figure of Moses has yet to be discussed. Additionally, I will argue that there are other elements to the miracles that could inform our consequent understanding of the Lord’s Supper.

³³¹ It is quite remarkable how well the motifs correlate to New Testament hopes of Christ’s return: ‘the marriage supper of the Lamb’ (Rev 19.9), ‘the judgment seat of Christ’ (2 Cor 5.10), ‘every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord’ (Phil 2.11), ‘every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb’ (Rev 7.9) and ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ (Rev 21.1). Admittedly, not all these motifs are intrinsically connected to the Lord’s Supper but there appears no reason to suggest that they could not have informed earlier expressions like later occasions.

5 The Feedings of the Crowds

As was noted in the previous chapter, the new Exodus and manna themes are also alluded to in the feeding miracles.³³² In this chapter, not only will we draw out the Jewish context of the feedings while addressing if there are one or two events, we will discuss the expectation of a prophet, like Moses. I will also argue that Jesus took the opportunities to predict his death, which, in turn, could have significant implications for how the Lord's Supper was understood.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand proves a crucial event in the life of Jesus. The event is recorded in all four Gospels,³³³ and a second feeding of four thousand is to be found in Mark and Matthew.³³⁴ Before we can expound the meaning of the two feeding accounts, we must first establish the context of the meals. This will lead us to discuss the merits of a Jewish setting for the Feeding of the Five Thousand. We will return to the question of a second feeding in the next section.

5.1 Context

While John refers to the Passover in his account of the feeding (John 6.4), there are figures who differ with a Jewish influence in the meal. Bultmann argues for Hellenistic parallels in the feeding miracles rather than a Jewish precedent,³³⁵ citing various sources from

³³² Page 45.

³³³ Matt 14.13-21; Mark 6.30-44; Luke 9.10-17; John 6.1-15.

³³⁴ Matt 15.32-39; Mark 8.1-10.

³³⁵ Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963, 234. In a similar vein, Wilkinson appears to prefer focussing on a Greco-Roman portrayal in understanding the preceding and consequent events. Jennifer Wilkinson, 'Mark and his Gentile Audience: a Traditio-Historical and Socio-Cultural Investigation of Mk 4.35-9.29 and its Interface with Gentile Polytheism in the Roman Near East,' Durham University website (http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/4428/1/Wilkinson_-

Hellenistic and other traditions.³³⁶ Although Bultmann does refer to Jewish sources, a great weakness of the argument is that there is no consideration of Old Testament precedents.³³⁷ It is also questionable how familiar the audience of the miracle would have been with Hellenistic examples.³³⁸ In respect to Old Testament precedents, it is worth discussing this at further length.

The first Old Testament precedent I would like to draw into our discussion is the story of Elisha feeding one hundred people with twenty loaves. The parallels between the feedings of the one hundred and the five thousand are striking. Both contain an instruction, a reply of disbelief, a limited supply of bread and leftover food.³³⁹ While the shared characteristics of the feedings are remarkable, to build a strong case for a Jewish context on this evidence alone would prove insufficient. The second miracle worth discussing is the bread from heaven supplied by God, spoken to Moses for the Israelites (Exod 16.4). Moses was upheld as the greatest prophet of Israel, who performed signs and wonders for God (Deut 34.10-12). Also noted is the promise that God would raise up a prophet like Moses from the people of Israel (Deut 18.15). Keener argues that the response of the crowd in John to Jesus' sign alluded to this promise.³⁴⁰ The reminiscence of the bread from heaven in the Johannine account may be further evidenced by the reference to the event in John 6.31.³⁴¹

_Prelims_and_Main_Chapters_and_Appendices.pdf?DDD32+; accessed March 2019, citing 143-148).

³³⁶ Bultmann, *History*, 236.

³³⁷ It is worth saying that this kind of exegesis might well have died out now along with an inappropriate use of the criterion of dissimilarity that displaces Jesus from Judaism. See Paul Rhodes Eddy and James K. Beilby, 'The Quest for the Historical Jesus: An Introduction,' in Paul Rhodes Eddy and James K. Beilby (eds.), *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*, London: Society for Prompting Christian Knowledge, 2010, 9-54, citing 40.

³³⁸ Keener, *Gospel*, 667. For further arguments, see also Blomberg, 'Jesus', 55.

³³⁹ 2 Kgs 4.42-44; Mark 6.37, 38, 43.

³⁴⁰ Keener, *Gospel*, 670.

³⁴¹ Keener, *Gospel*, 678. Although the specific biblical reference is disputed, it is hard to imagine that Exod 16.15 had not informed their perspective.

The potential weakness of the argument is that the text does not indicate which prophet is in sight (John 6.14). It may also be noted that John depicts the bread-from-heaven dialogue as the day following the feeding (John 6.22). However, the fact that the crowd recalled how God supplied manna for Israel during the Exodus when they questioned Jesus shows that Moses was on their minds. Furthermore, in light of our earlier discussion regarding the manna and new Exodus themes in the messianic banquet, it is quite likely that they took the event to have prophetic significance.³⁴² Thus, it seems probable that the Feeding of the Five Thousand did reflect Jesus as a type of Moses, however, I would stress that it may not be Moses alone who was evoked.³⁴³ I would suggest that it is plausible the crowd had both Moses and Elisha in view and saw Jesus as the foremost prophet.³⁴⁴ Irrespective of which Old Testament prophet Jesus' feedings of the crowds may have evoked, both instances give ground to a broadly Jewish setting for the miracles.

While Moses may have not been the only prophet in sight, it is clearly significant that Moses is in view here. The bread appears to evoke the motif of a festal celebration. This is emphasised further in John by specifying that the miracle took place while 'the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand' (John 6.4). The motif of a messiah figure is also present. While Mark and Matthew simply record that Jesus dismissed the crowd (Mark 6.45; Matt 14.22), John expands by saying that 'Perceiving then that they [the crowd] were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain

³⁴² Page 45-46.

³⁴³ Arguably, perhaps they even thought of Elijah (Matt 16.14; Mark 8.28; Luke 9.8, 19). Not least because of the Elisha connection. See John C. Poirier, 'The Endtime Return of Elijah and Moses at Qumran,' *Dead Sea Discoveries*, volume 10, 2003, 221-242, citing 241 and Sean A. Adams, 'Luke's Framing of the Feeding of the Five Thousand and an Evaluation of Possible Old Testament Allusions,' *Irish Biblical Studies*, volume 29, 2011, 152-169.

³⁴⁴ Blomberg, *Holiness*, 108. Although it draws different conclusions, the argument presents the prophets as equals.

by himself' (John 6.15). We have already discussed Jesus as servant king at the Last Supper, which corresponded with first-century Jewish expectations of a Davidic messiah.³⁴⁵ What is fascinating about the attempt to forcefully enthrone Jesus is that, immediately following the miracle, the crowd says that 'This [Jesus] is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world' (John 6.14). There is evidence to suggest that Moses was thought of in terms of a prophet king.³⁴⁶ A clear example comes from the writings of Philo:

Again, was not the joy of his partnership with the Father and Maker of all magnified also by the honour of being deemed worthy to bear the same title? For he [Moses] was named god and king of the whole nation, and entered, we are told, into the darkness where God was, that is into the unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal essence of existing things. Thus he beheld what is hidden from the sight of mortal nature, and, in himself and his life displayed for all to see, he has set before us, like some well-wrought picture, a piece of work beautiful and godlike, a model for those who are willing to copy it (*Mos.* 1. 158).³⁴⁷

While discussion around the figure of Moses is fascinating,³⁴⁸ our focus falls on two aspects: first, if Moses was thought of as a prophet king then this might explain the reaction of the crowd to Jesus. Second, the evidence here could support the claim that Jesus was being viewed as a new Moses. The idea does not appear exclusive to

³⁴⁵ Pages 41, 65.

³⁴⁶ For an excellent survey of the evidence, see Hurtado, *God*, 56-63.

³⁴⁷ F. H. Colson (tr.), *Philo*, Loeb Classical Library, volume 6, London: William Heinemann, 1935, 357-359.

³⁴⁸ For further study, see Wayne Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1967; William Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians: Biblical and Historical Studies*, London: Bloomsbury T. and T. Clark, 2016 and Pitre, *Jesus*, 53-147.

John's Gospel³⁴⁹ and, in light of the miraculous and prophetic work attributed to Moses (Deut 34.10-12), it would have been perfectly natural for those partaking to identify Jesus' actions as fulfilling the role of prophet king. However, not everyone agrees with this conclusion. Davies, although says that 'there can be little doubt that the feeding of the five thousand in the Synoptics is an act anticipatory of the Eucharist and of the Messianic banquet to come',³⁵⁰ argues that there is no concern for the new Exodus or Moses themes in the miracle. The argument is summarised by three contentions: first, the lack of geographical parallels. Second, according to Exodus 16.19, manna was not to be gathered. Third, no parallel is seen between Moses' relationship with Israel and Jesus' relationship with the crowds.³⁵¹

Although one could agree with Davies on the Last Supper being anticipated in the feeding miracles, as will become clearer later in the chapter, this argument does fall short on a number of accounts. The first two arguments appear to work on the premise that the two events do not replicate one another in exact detail. The fact that the events are reminiscent of one another but differ in detail may actually strengthen their historical probability because it adheres to a correct use of the criteria of dissimilarity.³⁵² However, even if one did not

³⁴⁹ Hence Allison says regarding Matthew's use of Moses' story that 'Its purpose is to intimate not that there was, happily, some vague or coincidental connection between Moses, the first deliverer, and Jesus, the messianic deliverer, but rather that the histories of those two men were, in the mysterious providence of a consistent God, and according to the principle that the last things are as the first, strikingly similar even down to details'. Dale C. Allison, Jr, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1993, 7.

³⁵⁰ W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1963, 49.

³⁵¹ *Ibid*, 48-49.

³⁵² On this note, Marshall says that 'This criterion is sometimes misused to deny the historicity of sayings or actions of Jesus which do have a parallel in Judaism. Its proper use is to confirm the historicity of sayings or actions of Jesus which stand out by their uniqueness from Judaism and yet are explicable within a Jewish context'. Marshall, *Supper*, 169 n. 20. Marshall elsewhere says that 'it is not possible to defend the historicity of Jesus' actions and sayings by arguing for their dissimilarity from those of the early church since the express purpose of the Lord's Supper was to

find that convincing enough, the claims are not technically true. The Israelites were permitted to store the manna so as to avoid working on the sabbath (Exod 16.22-26). Furthermore, reference to mountains appear in both Moses' encounters with God and the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Exod 19.11; 24.13; Matthew 14.23; Mark 6.46; John 6.3).³⁵³ What is fascinating is that Exodus 24 has already appeared in conjunction with the Last Supper because of reference to 'the blood of the covenant' (24.8).³⁵⁴ One could argue that this strengthens the motifs of a festal celebration and a messiah figure via the messianic banquet and helps support the new Exodus and Moses themes in the Feeding of the Five Thousand.³⁵⁵ Not only is Jesus the servant king at the Last Supper, he is the prophet king at the Feeding of the Five Thousand anticipating the great banquet.

5.1.1 Benediction

There is another aspect to the feeding miracle that also merits a Jewish setting. It has been implied from Jesus' mealtime blessing during the Feeding of the Five Thousand, that the prayer recited would have been 'the table prayer common to Judaism'.³⁵⁶ There are writers who take the Jewish nature of this benediction for granted, presuming direct continuity between the time of Jesus and the later developed

repeat what Jesus had done in memory of him, but we can argue that the church's practice finds its best explanation on the assumption that it was following the example and precept of Jesus'. Ibid, 142-143. In light of this, one could regard the use of the criteria to discredit a eucharistic reading of the Feeding of the Five Thousand by Blomberg as inappropriate. See Blomberg, 'Jesus', 55-56.

³⁵³ See T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Leuven: Peeters, 2009, 507.

³⁵⁴ Page 66.

³⁵⁵ If one were to naturally ask why Luke doesn't appear to make mention of mountains or hills, one could suggest that such allusions might have been lost on a Gentile audience. For further discussion on Luke's writing, see Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, 23 n. 1.

³⁵⁶ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Leicester: Apollos, 2002, 192.

Jewish practice.³⁵⁷ It is true that a systematic oral tradition was firmly established at the time of Jesus.³⁵⁸ This is further attested by the discussion between the Pharisees, scribes and Jesus concerning ritual washing.³⁵⁹ There are also strong parallels between the liturgy of Jewish table prayer and Jesus' Feeding of the Five Thousand, such as the prayer offered by one on behalf of the whole, followed by the breaking of the bread.³⁶⁰ It should be noted, however, that the codification of the oral tradition did not occur until the early third-century.³⁶¹ Keener questions how widespread the standard traditional Jewish benediction would have been at the time of Jesus.³⁶² This may have meant a level of fluidity within the blessing during Jesus' lifetime, natural to the character of oral tradition.³⁶³ While that might have been the case, the sources indicate that Jesus broke bread utilizing a type of common Jewish prayer.³⁶⁴

What is significant for our purpose is that, as will become clear later in the chapter, Jesus prayed a similar kind of prayer at the Last Supper. Although there is more to say about this later in the chapter, for now we will simply indicate that this could help in addressing, 'was the Lord's Supper affected by evocations of Jewish celebrations?' and 'are the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord's Supper linked through the death of Jesus?'. Before then, we will first address

³⁵⁷ For example, see Adele Reinhartz, 'The Gospel According to John,' in Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (eds.), *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 152-196, citing 169.

³⁵⁸ S. Safrai, 'Religion in Everyday Life,' in S. Safrai and M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, Amsterdam: Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, 1976, 793-833, citing 793.

³⁵⁹ Matt 15.1-2; Mark 7.1-5.

³⁶⁰ Safrai, 'Religion', 802.

³⁶¹ Marcus, 'Passover', 306.

³⁶² Keener, *Gospel*, 667.

³⁶³ Safrai, 'Religion', 793.

³⁶⁴ Matt 14.19; Mark 6.41; Luke 9.16; John 6.11.

the historical credibility of a second feeding miracle.

5.2 Second Feeding

The reader may recall that the Feeding of the Four Thousand is recorded in Mark and Matthew alone as noted above. In order to proceed, let us first address the question: are the Feedings of the Crowds in Mark and Matthew descriptive of one or two distinct event(s)?

5.2.1 *One event*

It has been argued that the feeding accounts in Mark and Matthew are a doublet of the same event.³⁶⁵ The evidence offered is twofold: the marked commonalities between the meals and the disciples' forgetfulness of the first miracle, which is considered unlikely.³⁶⁶ In response, the points made here shall be addressed systematically to test their durability.

With respect to the first point, there is no reason to question the veracity of one story because of commonalities between the portrayals.³⁶⁷ Edwards helpfully lists the differences between the meals; key of which are the amount of bread and fish, the number of people fed, the time the crowd spent with Jesus and the quantity of baskets leftover.³⁶⁸ A further rebuttal to the argument could be found in Jesus' remark to the disciples in Mark 8.19-20, where he refers to

³⁶⁵ Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, Word Biblical Commentary, volume 34a, Dallas: Word Books, 1989, 401.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Although Guelich refers to the differences between the two accounts, it does not persuade him from thinking of the second feeding as a variant of the former; though admittedly, Guelich does not state his position with total clarity.

³⁶⁷ France, *Gospel*, 601.

³⁶⁸ Edwards, *Gospel*, 228.

the meals as two distinct events.³⁶⁹ France also questions why the narratives would place the less impressive miracle after the first, unless two meals took place; otherwise it would appear rather anticlimactic.³⁷⁰ All these factors start to produce a compelling argument in the opposite direction to the original assertion, namely that the Feeding of the Four Thousand should be considered a bona fide, distinct occurrence. It should be noted, however, that Guelich supplements the opposing argument further by building on a gentile focus concerning the second meal; this will be addressed in the next subsection. For now, let us move to the second argument; the unlikely forgetfulness of the first miracle by the disciples.³⁷¹

The forgetfulness of the disciples does not necessitate that one event is in view, as the focus of Jesus' reply is the disciples' lack of faith.³⁷² Concerning this matter, Cranfield astutely says that 'As a matter of fact, even mature Christians (which the disciples at this time certainly were not) do often doubt the power of God after they have had signal experience of it'.³⁷³ This may raise a further question: what was the response Jesus hoped for from the disciples? It appears difficult to locate the meaning of Jesus' words; France says of this episode that 'the readers are left, like the disciples, to puzzle out for themselves just what lesson the two feeding miracles are meant to have conveyed'.³⁷⁴ While this could begin to point us in the direction of the chapters' opening remarks, suffice to say that there is a mysterious character in Jesus' words and actions in both of the events depicted.

³⁶⁹ Ibid, 229.

³⁷⁰ France, *Gospel*, 600.

³⁷¹ Matt 16.5-12; Mark 8.14-21.

³⁷² Guelich, *Mark*, 427.

³⁷³ C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, Cambridge Greek New Testament Commentary, London: Cambridge University Press, 1959, 205.

³⁷⁴ France, *Gospel*, 607-608.

Although the critique offered does not emphatically refute the whole argument, it does indicate that to presuppose one meal on the basis of the disciples' forgetfulness proves weak. Due to: the differences that occur in the meals; Jesus' reference to two events; the anticlimactic placement of the second miracle; Jesus' focus on the disciples' lack of faith and the mystery of Jesus' words and actions; I conclude that it is probable that the Feeding of the Crowds in Mark and Matthew are two distinct events.

One question that arises out of our findings thus far is why John and Luke refer to only one feeding? While difficult to answer with absolute certainty, there are a few possibilities: first, it could be said that the inclusion or absence of certain material in John is not unique to the feeding miracles.³⁷⁵ Secondly, some have argued that there was a distinct 'Signs Source' utilized in John.³⁷⁶ If that were the case, the Feeding of the Five Thousand could have come from a different tradition which might help explain the absence of a second feeding in the account.³⁷⁷ With respect to Luke, we will discuss the gentile placement of the Feeding of the Four Thousand later in the chapter. If that were the case, perhaps Luke did not feel the need to stress a second feeding as his focus was already towards a gentile audience.³⁷⁸ At any rate, both writers might have not included the second miracle

³⁷⁵ For a wider discussion of differences and similarities between the Gospels, see Robert H. Stein, 'The Matthew-Luke Agreements against Mark: Insight from John,' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, volume 54, 1992, 482-502.

³⁷⁶ See *ibid*, 496-497 and Robert Tomson Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel*, London: T. and T. Clark, 2004, 205. For a wider discussion of signs in John's Gospel, see Marianne Meye Thompson, 'Signs and Faith in the Fourth Gospel,' *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, volume 1, 1991, 89-108.

³⁷⁷ For further discussion, see Edwin D. Johnson, 'The Johannine Version of the Feeding of the Five Thousand – An independent Tradition?,' *New Testament Studies*, volume 8, 1962, 151-154.

³⁷⁸ See Morris, *Gospel*, 23 n. 1 and Bob Deffinbaugh, '1. The Silence is Shattered (Luke 1:1-38),' Luke: The Gospel of the Gentiles, Bible.org website (<https://bible.org/seriespage/1-silence-shattered-luke-11-38>; accessed August 2019). Admittedly, this could have provided *more* reason for Luke to include it but given the consistent gentile orientation in Luke, it does appear quite probable.

for theological or literary purposes.³⁷⁹ To suggest that the Feeding of Four Thousand was not a distinct historical occurrence on this basis alone would be an argument from silence. Having briefly noted a gentile placement already, we will now address further the argument of Guelich and discuss the merits of a Hellenised influence on the Feeding of the Four Thousand.

5.2.2 *Hellenised*

Guelich argues that because of the gentile focus in the immediate context of the Feeding of the Four Thousand, that the second meal is a Hellenised variant of the Feeding of the Five Thousand; he purports that the shift from 'blessed' to 'giving thanks' in Jesus' prayer at the second miracle correlates with later eucharistic traditions, thus affirming the argument for a gentile portrayal through the variant of one event.³⁸⁰ However, this raises difficulties, especially when we consider the Jewish context of the Feeding of the Five Thousand as discussed above. In order to address the argument, we will deconstruct the latter point and return to the former. Let us discuss if Jesus' choice of words reflected a Hellenised shift.

There are remarkable parallels present between the Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Last Supper. Not only do the two occasions utilize a common Jewish table prayer, both contain the order of bread Jesus blessed, broke and gave.³⁸¹ Edwards argues for a stronger parallel in the Feeding of the Four Thousand in that Jesus broke, giving thanks and gave.³⁸² While the argument of Edwards may on its

³⁷⁹ For a wider discussion of Luke's structuring of the narrative, see David P. Moessner, 'Luke 9:1-50: Luke's Preview of the Journey of the Prophet like Moses of Deuteronomy,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, volume 102, 1983, 575-605.

³⁸⁰ Guelich, *Mark*, 408.

³⁸¹ Edwards, *Gospel*, 192-193.

³⁸² *Ibid*, 228.

own be insufficient, it is striking that the term 'giving thanks' is found in the second feeding and the Last Supper. The second meal also contains Jesus' conversation in first person,³⁸³ as does the last supper³⁸⁴ but not in the Feeding of the Five Thousand.³⁸⁵

If the Feeding of the Four Thousand is simply a Hellenised portrayal of one event, the strong parallels identified between the second meal and the Last Supper might appear misplaced; especially considering that the Last Supper was a Passover meal as argued earlier.³⁸⁶ It should also be noted that there is nothing explicit in the term 'giving thanks' that requires a different perception of Jesus' prayer than in the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Perhaps one could say that this kind of interpretive lens simply frustrates an otherwise clear text,³⁸⁷ and that Jesus' prayer would have been akin to the benediction found in the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

With regard to the second point: although there appears a consensus for a gentile placement of the second meal,³⁸⁸ this need not be to the exclusion of a Jewish setting. It is worth noting that after the second feeding, Jesus is recorded as having a discussion with the Pharisees.³⁸⁹ Matthew also records that the crowd's response to Jesus' miraculous activity prior to the miracle was that 'they glorified the God of Israel'.³⁹⁰ The strongest evidence is found in Jesus' conversation with a gentile woman recorded earlier.³⁹¹ While the

³⁸³ Matt 15.32; Mark 8.2-3.

³⁸⁴ Matt 26.29; Mark 14.25.

³⁸⁵ Edwards, *Gospel*, 228.

³⁸⁶ Page 62.

³⁸⁷ France, *Gospel*, 601.

³⁸⁸ France, *Gospel*, 588; Edwards, *Gospel*, 229.

³⁸⁹ Matt 16.1-4; Mark 8.11-13.

³⁹⁰ Matt 15.31

³⁹¹ Matt 15.21-28; Mark 7.24-30.

request of the woman is fulfilled, Jesus does affirm that the ‘bread’ of his ministry is primarily for the Jews.³⁹² Although the second meal appears to be a gentile crowd, this does not necessitate the concept of a variant through one event. Expressed simply, Jesus has invited the gentiles to partake from the banquet of the Jewish messiah.³⁹³ On the subject of the messianic banquet, Liu insightfully argues that the events between and including the feeding miracles themselves are linked via the messianic banquet.³⁹⁴ While that could be deemed a stretch too far, perhaps there is some merit to the claim but that will take a little clarification.

Before the second feeding, Jesus is recorded as having a dispute with the Pharisees over ritual washing,³⁹⁵ a core part of their *halakah*.³⁹⁶ The debate around cleanliness becomes particularly important when our attention turns to table fellowship.³⁹⁷ Earlier in the thesis we discussed the messianic banquet in conjunction to Qumran. Not only did we say that it took place around the common meal but that it evoked the eschatological banquet; including the motif of a messiah figure.³⁹⁸ A little earlier in the text cited as supporting evidence (1Q28 1 ii) it stipulates:

And no man smitten with any human uncleanness shall enter the assembly of God; no man smitten with any of them shall be confirmed in his office in the congregation. No man smitten in his

³⁹² Matt 15.26; Edwards, *Gospel*, 220.

³⁹³ France, *Gospel*, 601.

³⁹⁴ Rebekah Liu, ‘A Dog Under the Table at the Messianic Banquet: A Study of Mark 7:24-30,’ *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, volume 48, 2010, 251-255, citing 252.

³⁹⁵ Matt 15.1-2; Mark 7.1-4.

³⁹⁶ ‘By “oral law” is meant the Halakah – legal interpretations of the (written) Torah’. Dunn, *Partings*, 130.

³⁹⁷ For a discussion around how central was table fellowship to pharisaic halakoth, see Dunn, *Partings*, 144-146.

³⁹⁸ Page 45.

flesh, or paralysed feet or hands, or lame, or blind, or deaf, or dumb, or smitten in the flesh with a visible blemish; no old and tottery man unable to stay still in the midst of the congregation... let him not enter among [the congregation] for he is smitten (1Q28 1 ii).³⁹⁹

It is significant how close the instructions are here to in Leviticus where it says that 'None of your offspring [Aaron] throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the bread of his God. For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame' (Lev 21.17-18). There are two aspects worth noting: first, clearly Qumran had attributed sanctity to their ordinary meals. Secondly, whoever one breaks bread with can take on a heightened value. It is striking that Jesus makes a point of connecting with those excluded from such meals, particularly in conjunction with the messianic banquet. Earlier in the thesis we noted texts in the New Testament where Jesus included social outcasts and gentiles in the messianic banquet.⁴⁰⁰ We have also argued above that Jesus broke bread utilizing a common Jewish table blessing during the feeding miracles. With this in mind, it is striking that while initially Jesus does affirm that the 'bread' of his ministry is primarily for the Jews, he does fulfil the request of the woman, heal the 'smitten' and then provide miraculously for a gentile crowd.⁴⁰¹ It is hard not to see Jesus' activity here as intentionally extending the blessings of inclusion in the messianic banquet to the gentiles.⁴⁰² In light of this, France says concerning the gentile woman's request that 'Bread here is an image for the blessings of the Messiah's ministry to his own people and,

³⁹⁹ Vermes, *Sea*, 161.

⁴⁰⁰ Page 50.

⁴⁰¹ Matt 15.28, 30, 36; Mark 7. 30, 37; 8. 6.

⁴⁰² Thus Dunn says that '*The very ones whom Qumran went out of its way to exclude from its table-fellowship and so from the eschatological banquet, are the very ones Jesus says firmly are to be included*' (italics the author's). Dunn, *Partings*, 148-149, italics original.

following on from this incident, among the Gentiles'.⁴⁰³

Having now argued for a Jewish setting to the gentile feeding, aided by the ties to the messianic banquet, usage of a common Jewish table blessing and the parallels between the feedings and the Last supper, we now have one outstanding claim to address: that the Feedings of the Crowds did not anticipate the Last Supper. There are certain scholars who, although recognising there are some parallels to the Last Supper, do not see any further connection to Jesus' death or the Lord's Supper in the feeding miracles. Marshall, who although earlier said that 'to eat with Jesus was to share in fellowship with the Messiah as God's agent who brings his blessings to men and thus to anticipate the heavenly feast at the table of God',⁴⁰⁴ goes on to caution attributing any eucharistic significance to the miracles:

There is no connection between the [feeding miracle] stories and the death of Jesus. it is clear that the Last Supper is in no sense anticipated in the feeding miracles, except in that both were occasions of fellowship with Jesus and both involved the satisfaction of hunger by Jesus... while the early church recognised these motifs in the stories of miraculous feeding, we cannot be sure how far they go back to the mind of Jesus himself.⁴⁰⁵

Blomberg, utilizing a different methodology, arrives at a conclusion not unlike Marshall's:

Many scholars discern eucharistic significance to the feeding miracles, particularly in light of John's redactional overlay about

⁴⁰³ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 2002, 296.

⁴⁰⁴ Marshall, *Supper*, 95.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 96-97.

eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood (John 6:51–58). Whether or not this was the Fourth Gospel's meaning, it is unlikely to have been in Mark's purview at the earliest stages of the tradition... Nothing about wine appears in any of the four accounts of the feeding miracle.⁴⁰⁶

There are commonalities worth noting: first, both direct attention to the absence of wine in their argumentation.⁴⁰⁷ Secondly, both appear more comfortable with attributing ideas in this instance to the Gospel writers rather than the ideas stemming from Jesus himself.⁴⁰⁸ I would suggest that both commonalities are dubious. First, it will become clear in the next chapter that the universal use of wine in Lord's Supper practice may not always be assumed.⁴⁰⁹ Even if that were the case, would it not have suited the purposes of the early church to incorporate the use of wine and exclude the fish if the eucharistic parallels *did not* stem from the historical Jesus?⁴¹⁰ At any rate, Jesus certainly drank wine at the Last Supper.⁴¹¹ With regard to the second commonality, it is worth noting that our only access to the latter is through the former. In other words, our only way to ascertain the intent of Jesus is via the Gospel writers. In light of this, let us discuss if the Gospel writers do provide any clues as to what, if at all, was Jesus' intention during the crowd feedings.

⁴⁰⁶ Blomberg, 'Jesus', 55-56. See also Blomberg, *Holiness*, 103.

⁴⁰⁷ 'In no sense can fish be equated with wine'. Marshall, *Supper*, 96.

⁴⁰⁸ Crossan appears to work on that basis also. See John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, New York: HarperCollins, 1992, 398.

⁴⁰⁹ Page 93-94.

⁴¹⁰ See Pitre, *Jesus*, 89.

⁴¹¹ Page 62.

5.3 Intent of Jesus

So far in the chapter we have been able to identify Jesus as the prophet king during the Feeding of the Five Thousand presiding at the messianic banquet. We have also argued for the historical validity of the Feeding of the Four Thousand, claiming that Jesus invited the gentiles to feast from the banquet of the Jewish messiah. It is hard to imagine that even if the evocations only occurred in the mind of the partakers,⁴¹² or later the Gospel writers, that Jesus would have *not* been aware of the kinds of expectations he was evoking. Cast in the light of our wider discussion of other instances in Jesus' ministry in the previous chapter,⁴¹³ this seems quite probable: that Jesus was fully aware of how his actions were to be understood. Bearing in mind the parallels already cited, of table prayer and the specific way Jesus distributed the bread, between the Last Supper and the feeding miracles, it is hard to see this as merely coincidental. The argument that now follows is particularly reliant on Atkinson.⁴¹⁴

Clearly the events held a great importance to all four Gospel writers. As such, this allows us to perhaps dig a little deeper into what meaning one might draw from the events and what meaning they might have held for Jesus. However, as we saw earlier in the chapter, it is difficult to locate the exact meaning of Jesus' words and what he intended the disciples to take from it. Yet, Dodd's comments might point us in the right direction:

What remained was the memory of a sense of baffling mystery at the centre of the whole transaction. The mystery concerned the action of Jesus in giving bread to the hungry crowd. Something about the way

⁴¹² This is not to say that it occurred to them at the time but perhaps shortly after, with further reflection. See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 72-73.

⁴¹³ Page 51.

⁴¹⁴ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 71-78.

he gave it seemed to remove his action from the categories of everyday experience.⁴¹⁵

It is fascinating to note how the Gospel writers describe bread in the feeding miracles. While in Mark, at first glance, the bread and fish appear to receive equal weight (6.41-44), the fish are later taken somewhat as an 'afterthought' (8.6-7).⁴¹⁶ Matthew does not record the distribution of the fish during the Feeding of the Five Thousand (14.19) and even in the Feeding of the Four Thousand, the disciples' question to Jesus focuses on the bread: 'Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?' (15.33).⁴¹⁷ John only refers to the 'leftover' bread as being collected afterward (6.13).⁴¹⁸

In light of all this, it looks like a stronger emphasis fell on the bread than on the fish.⁴¹⁹ Mark also offers further confirmation:

And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he [Jesus] was alone on the land. And he saw that they [the disciples] were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And he got into the boat with

⁴¹⁵ C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity*, Bristol: Shoreline Books, 1970, 120.

⁴¹⁶ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 75. For wider discussion, see Edwards, *Gospel*, 228.

⁴¹⁷ Admittedly, it does appear that fish were included in the distribution (Matt 15.36).

⁴¹⁸ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 75. See also Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004, 203.

⁴¹⁹ See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 75. This seems to make a good case against a bread-fish Lord's Supper practice in the early church. One would have thought that if this were the case, the writers would have placed a greater emphasis on the fish. See Crossan, *Jesus*, 398.

them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, *for they did not understand about the loaves*, but their hearts were hardened (Mark 6.47-52, italics mine).

However, in view of the turbulent event, it would be perfectly natural to ask: 'what were the disciples expected to understand?'. That the disciples arrived at a measure of understanding appears the case in Matthew:

Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." ... "Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt 16.6-7, 9-12).

There are a few items worth noting: firstly, both events take place shortly after the respective feedings.⁴²⁰ Secondly, in both Jesus calming the storm and his discussion 'of the leaven of the Pharisees', the concerns of the disciples remained on *physical* realities.⁴²¹ Thirdly, Jesus' questions to the disciples in this latter instance focus exclusively on the bread.⁴²² While one could regard this as an editorial decision,

⁴²⁰ Matt 14.22; 15.39; 16.5; Mark 6.45; 8.10, 13; John 6.16-17. Although the second feeding is not included in Luke, he does record just before the discussion of leaven that 'Meanwhile, when the crowd gathered in thousands' (Luke 12.1). See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 73.

⁴²¹ Matt 14.26; 16.7; Mark 6.59-50; 8.16; John 6.19. I do regard Jesus walking supernaturally across the water as a genuine historical occurrence. For a discussion surveying anti-supernatural suppositions in 'Jesus Research', see Craig A. Evans, 'Life-of-Jesus Research and the Eclipse of Mythology,' *Theological Studies*, volume 54, 1993, 3-36.

⁴²² Matt 16.6-11; Mark 8.15-21.

there is an equal likelihood that it 'may be a focus of attention that went back to Jesus'.⁴²³ If anything, the idea that the disciples were none the wiser to the meaning of the miracles at this point would fulfil the criteria of embarrassment: making any amendments on their part less likely.⁴²⁴ Thus we can say that the disciples had not fully understood the *spiritual* import of Jesus' words and actions. This also suggests that Jesus did invest a deeper meaning into the miracles:

There is the possibility that in calling Pharisees, so to speak, "leaven," he was implicitly calling himself "bread." If that is so, this deduction supports the accuracy of the exposition one finds presented in John 6:32-58, in which Jesus is the living bread that comes from heaven and is broken to bring life to the world.⁴²⁵

If Jesus did understand himself as 'the bread of life' (John 6.35), what meaning did he anticipate that the disciples would derive from the feeding miracles? The answer might be found in Jesus' predictions of his death: 'in veiled terms, to be understood only with hindsight after the event, Jesus fed the crowds *in order to predict his death and its purpose*'.⁴²⁶ It is striking that in Matthew and Mark, the statements are recorded shortly after the Feeding of the Four Thousand and the Feeding of the Five Thousand in Luke and John.⁴²⁷

We have already said earlier in the chapter that Jesus appears to have had future events in mind and that Jesus was fully aware of how his actions were to be understood. This appears confirmed by our findings in both miracles with regard to the messianic banquet motifs

⁴²³ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 76.

⁴²⁴ For a useful discussion of the criteria of embarrassment alongside wider criteria, see Evans, 'life', 21-33.

⁴²⁵ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 76.

⁴²⁶ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 72, italics original.

⁴²⁷ Matt 16.21; Mark 8.31; Luke 9.21-22; John 6.51.

of a festal celebration and a messiah figure, along with the new Exodus and Moses themes. Jesus is the prophet king anticipating the great banquet, who intentionally extends the blessings of inclusion in the messianic banquet to the gentiles. However, the messianic banquet, like the Passover, also looks back to the original exodus events.⁴²⁸ This is particularly interesting in light of the parallels already noted with the Last Supper, which was a Passover meal.⁴²⁹ Taking into account many of the factors identified here, Pitre says that 'Jesus seems to have both deliberately *modelled* his words and deeds on events from biblical history and *anticipated* what he would ultimately accomplish at the Last Supper'.⁴³⁰ The conclusion one may arrive at, particularly in light of our accumulative findings in this chapter, is that Jesus indicated the character of his death and how it was to be later understood during the Feeding of the Crowds: 'Perhaps he foresaw that countless thousands, not just five thousand, would benefit from the breaking of this latter bread. He was to give his life for the world'.⁴³¹

While Atkinson does offer many insightful comments, his argument does not go far enough to address an alternative theory if such understanding did not come directly from the historical Jesus.⁴³² However, that this understanding was arrived at by the early church is evident through the Gospel writings.⁴³³ At any rate, one may trace it retrospectively from his death. Yet, the frequency of the messianic banquet motifs and new Exodus themes in the miracles suggest that Jesus was already looking forward: 'And the bread that I will give for

⁴²⁸ Page 47.

⁴²⁹ Page 66.

⁴³⁰ Pitre, *Jesus*, 89, italics original.

⁴³¹ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 78.

⁴³² This also appears to be the case in Pitre's argument. See Pitre, *Jesus* 89-90.

⁴³³ See *ibid*, 77.

the life of the world is my flesh' (John 6.51).⁴³⁴

In addressing our critical research questions, our answer to 'was the Lord's Supper affected by evocations of Jewish celebrations?' in light of the messianic banquet, would be 'yes'. The answer to 'are the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord's Supper linked through the death of Jesus?' would also appear 'yes'. Arguably, in the case of the miracle feedings, the link can be traced back to the mind of Jesus. Admittedly, our answers to 'why did the Lord's Supper come about in the first place?' and 'to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord's Supper during the first century?' are addressed indirectly through the intertwined motifs in the messianic banquet and the Passover as both looked forward to a new Exodus. However, the miracle in John does specify, 'Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand' (6.4).⁴³⁵ Because our answer to question two was 'yes', one might also be tempted to answer question three, 'because of the death of Jesus' but that would be premature, prior to his death. We also said at the end of the previous chapter that a further discussion of the ethos and practice of the Lord's Supper was also required. In light of this, and the last two questions posed, let us now turn to discuss the Passover and Lord's Supper in a wider context in order to provide a fuller response.

⁴³⁴ Atkinson also argues that the discussion of Judas betraying Jesus in John (6.70-71) is also further evidence that Jesus was looking towards his death. Atkinson, *Jesus*, 77.

⁴³⁵ See Marshall, *Supper*, 96.

6 The Passover and the Lord's Supper

Because two of our central questions are 'to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord's Supper during the first century?' and 'are the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord's Supper linked through the death of Jesus?', a good way to proceed in this chapter would be to discuss the similarities and differences between the Passover and the Lord's Supper in the first century.

6.1 Similarities

It was said earlier that Passover in the first century evoked 'the future redemption of Israel from its sorry plight at the coming of the Messiah'.⁴³⁶ Identifiable motifs in the messianic banquet were discussed, along with how Jesus evoked messianic, eschatological expectations at the Last Supper.⁴³⁷ One striking revelation earlier in our discussion was that not only did the messianic banquet and the Passover look back and forward to the (new) exodus,⁴³⁸ The looking-backward-and-forward dynamic also featured in the Lord's Supper which became more pronounced over time (Rev 19.9).⁴³⁹

In 1 Corinthians it says, 'For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes' (1 Cor 11.26). This is significant for at least two reasons: first, it clearly links the Lord's Supper to the death of Jesus.⁴⁴⁰ Secondly, it appears to imply nearly all the motifs commonly found in the messianic banquet, such

⁴³⁶ Marshall, *Supper*, 77. Page 62.

⁴³⁷ Page 64.

⁴³⁸ Page 47.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014, 556.

as a festal celebration, a messiah figure and a gathering at the end of time.⁴⁴¹ We can also find the motif of God's final judgement and the new Exodus theme in 1 Corinthians (5.7; 11.29-31). In light of all this, one could say that there appears a striking contiguity in *ethos* between the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord's Supper. Hence, we were able to say earlier that instead of looking back to the Exodus events, the early Christians would now recall the ultimate sacrifice of this new Passover lamb, the motifs taken over into the exaltation of Jesus.⁴⁴² However, let us now address the differences in *practice* between the Passover and the Lord's Supper.

6.2 Differences

6.2.1 Wine

Although the drinking of wine in the celebration of the Passover was discussed earlier,⁴⁴³ the use of wine in the Lord's Supper is perhaps more difficult to discern and an argument to the contrary is possible. Bradshaw argues a strong case for the practice of a water or bread-only Eucharist,⁴⁴⁴ this is indicated by the 'cup-bread'⁴⁴⁵ order (1 Cor 10.16; *Did.* 9) and water as 'an Old Testament typology of the Eucharist' (1 Cor 10.3-4).⁴⁴⁶ Bradshaw also draws attention to the possible abstinence and 'admonition'⁴⁴⁷ of wine (1 Tim 5.23; Rom

⁴⁴¹ The latter motif may imply – by extension – the motif of the ultimate establishment of God's reign, hence Marshall says that 'In any case, it is fairly certain that the [eschatological] hope belongs to the Lord's Supper. We have already seen that such a hope may have been associated with the Jewish Passover meal'. Marshall, *Supper*, 117. In any case, this was the wider hope held by early Christians when Jesus returns. Page 68.

⁴⁴² Page 68-69.

⁴⁴³ Page 61-62.

⁴⁴⁴ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 59-60.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 46-47.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 53.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 51.

14.21) and eucharistic practices that do not *explicitly* indicate wine (Acts 2.42).⁴⁴⁸ While one could conceive this as an argument from silence, Jeremias also says that 'The Christian communities, whose members were mostly from the poorer strata of society, did not always have wine available.'⁴⁴⁹ If one was perhaps sympathetic to impoverished Christianity then one could imagine the Lord's Supper without the use of wine. However, the weakness of the argument is that 1 Corinthians clearly had wine involved (1 Cor 11.21) and there might be allusions to wine elsewhere (*Did.* 9).⁴⁵⁰

In light of this, the evidence could appear to go in either direction. While there might be the obvious symbolism with the Last Supper in the use of wine (1 Cor 11.25), if the early disciples felt under no compulsion to re-enact a Passover meal every time they took the Lord's Supper, then the absence of wine in some Lord's Supper practice need not prove too vexing. Incidentally, that may also extend to all the differences addressed in the chapter. However, that is quite different than suggesting that the cup was absent altogether.⁴⁵¹ So here might be evidence of differences in Lord's Supper practice.

6.2.2 Meals

An obvious parallel between the Passover and the Lord's Supper is that they were situated around a meal.⁴⁵² However, whether the Lord's Supper was distinct from the meal is contested.⁴⁵³ While that

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, 57.

⁴⁴⁹ Jeremias, *Words*, 115.

⁴⁵⁰ See Andrew Louth and Maxwell Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers: Early Christian Writings*, London: Penguin Books, 1987, 198 n. 4.

⁴⁵¹ Hence Marshall says that 'it is the cup which is the symbol, and the wine as such is not significant'. Marshall, *Supper*, 114. This would be true even if water were used also.

⁴⁵² Admittedly, this was not uncommon in Greco-Roman society. Bradshaw, *Origins*, 44.

⁴⁵³ See *ibid*, 45.

may be the case, Twelftree argues that although 'the breaking of bread' (Acts 2.42) does not refer to the Lord's Supper, he does conclude that the early church on these occasions followed Jewish meal etiquette.⁴⁵⁴ At this junction, the meal practice itself might look quite similar. That being said, the difficulties start to arise once our focus turns toward Corinth and considers the influence of non-Jewish meals.

An early papyrus says, 'Chaeremon requests your company at dinner at the table of the lord Sarapis in the Serapaeum to-morrow, the 15th, at 9 o'clock' (P. Oxy. 1 110).⁴⁵⁵ It has been noted that 'the language here is similar' to 1 Corinthians: 'You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons' (10.21).⁴⁵⁶ In view of this, Dunn argues concerning the Lord's Supper:

That it shared characteristics with other sacred meals of the time... The implication is that at the Lord's meal the Lord Christ was himself the host, just as Sarapis was conceived as the host of the meals to which he gave invitation, the body of Christ... taking the place of the meat that had come from the sacrifices made to Sarapis. Such parallels could well encourage the inference among onlookers that the Lord Christ was a god like Sarapis, and the one to whom the

⁴⁵⁴ Twelftree, *People*, 130.

⁴⁵⁵ Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (trs.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1898, 177. While the document itself is dated the 2nd century, 'the god Serapis' could be considerably older. See Stefan Pfeiffer, 'The God Serapis, his Cult and the Beginnings of the Ruler Cult in Ptolemaic Egypt,' in Paul McKechnie and Philippe Guillaume (eds.), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*, Leiden: Brill, 2008, 387-408, 390 n. 14 and Ruth Stiehl, 'The Origin of the Cult of Sarapis,' *History of Religions*, volume 3, 1963, 21-33, citing 33. For further discussion of wider Greek meal invitations, see Chan-Hie Kim, 'The Papyrus Invitation,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, volume 94, 1975, 391-402.

⁴⁵⁶ See Marshall, *Supper*, 28.

Christians offered their devotion.⁴⁵⁷

There is a certain persuasiveness to Dunn's argument, given that it would have been perfectly natural for the Corinthians to attempt to draw parallels between their own culture and the Lord's Supper.⁴⁵⁸ Furthermore, Fee says 'that there can be very little question that this is *the Christian version of a meal in honor of a deity*'.⁴⁵⁹ While that might have been the case, there are difficulties with the conclusion. First, scholars have cautioned against relying too heavily on such evidence as already cited on a number of grounds: regional uncertainty, the dating of the documents and how fragmented the documents are.⁴⁶⁰ Second, any parallels in language could have also derived equally from Jewish sources (Ezek 44.16; Mal 1.7; 12).⁴⁶¹ To illustrate further Philo says:

the sacrificial meals... are now the property not of him by whom but of Him to Whom the victim has been sacrificed, He the benefactor, the bountiful, Who has made the convivial company of those who carry out the sacrifices partners of the altar whose board they share (*Spec.* 1.221).⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁷ Dunn, *Worship*, 50. See also James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning in Jerusalem*, Christianity in the Making, volume 2, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009, 616.

⁴⁵⁸ Marshall, *Supper*, 27-28. See also Kim, 'Papyrus', 391.

⁴⁵⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-theological Study*, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007, 491, italics original.

⁴⁶⁰ 'Of course, we should not forget that all the papyrus invitations here collected are from Hellenistic Egypt. Whether the same type of Greek invitation was used in Palestine at the time of Jesus cannot be answered conclusively, until we have such discoveries in Palestine. As far as I know, we do not yet have any concrete evidence'. Kim, 'Papyrus', 391-392 n. 1. 'It is possible that eating and drinking in some other cults had a similar significance, but we know so little about these cults that it is impossible to draw any firm conclusions regarding the presence of this motif... It emerges that the pagan background has nothing to do with the origins of the Lord's Supper'. Marshall, *Supper*, 29.

⁴⁶¹ Marshall, *Supper*, 28.

⁴⁶² Colson, *Philo*, 229. This has been interpreted: 'Philo means that God invites the worshippers to a feast at which he is the host and the provider of good things. Thus the people who eat the sacrifices are partakers of the food from the altar of the God

There are a few items worth noting: first, it is remarkable how well these sentiments correspond with 1 Corinthians: ‘Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?’ (10.18).⁴⁶³ Second, the context here and in Philo is ‘the routine followed at Jewish sacrifices’ (see Lev 19.5-6; *Spec.* 1.220).⁴⁶⁴

The final difficulty with Dunn’s argument is that, even if one did concede that the Lord’s Supper was a Christian version of a meal taken in homage to a Greek God such as Sarapis, it would appear counterproductive to Paul’s argument (1 Cor 10.20-22).⁴⁶⁵ In light of all this, the Jewish parallels seem stronger for helping to explain the origin and development of the Lord’s Supper. While it might be injudicious to deny the existence of any parallels between pagan feasting or that such occasions were in the background of the situation in Corinth,⁴⁶⁶ it would also appear injudicious to ascribe to the Lord’s Supper any concepts which may detract from the exclusive monotheism that so characterised Judaism and early Christianity.⁴⁶⁷ In light of all this, it is difficult to discern the exact differences or similarities between the Passover and the Lord’s Supper in this instance. While there might have been a different ethos that came

whom they worship and in this sense they enjoy fellowship with God at the meal’. Marshall, *Supper*, 122.

⁴⁶³ Marshall, *Supper*, 121-122.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, 122.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ See Hurtado, *Origins*, 27.

⁴⁶⁷ Admittedly, Dunn does appear to clarify his reasoning somewhat later on: ‘the imagery to describe the efficaciousness of Christ’s death “for sin” was drawn from the sacrificial ritual of Israel’. Dunn, *Worship*, 55. It appears strange that, given the express purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to ‘proclaim the Lord’s death’ (1 Cor 11.26), Dunn offers little discussion as to what relevance this might have had towards our understanding of the meal. For a wider assessment, see Larry W. Hurtado, ‘Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? A Review Essay,’ [wordpress.com website](https://larryhurtado.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/dunn-was-jesus-worshipped-review.pdf) (<https://larryhurtado.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/dunn-was-jesus-worshipped-review.pdf>; accessed September 2019). For a further discussion of monotheism in Jewish and Christian circles, see Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and other studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008, 3-4.

from Greek dinner invitations, the Jewish parallels are more likely. Therefore, the ethos may have been quite similar. However, pagan feasting does appear to be in the background of the situation in Corinth so perhaps the meal practice of the Lord's Supper was quite different to that of the Passover.

6.2.3 Location

One part that might look quite different is where the Passover and the Lord's supper took place. If the Passover only happened in-and-around the temple, then they might appear strikingly different. However, if the Passover Seder was a domestic meal, as argued previously,⁴⁶⁸ then one might reasonably expect more similarity. There appears a consensus that the Lord's Supper took the form of a house meal (see Acts 2.46).⁴⁶⁹ While that might be the case, temples dedicated to different deities might have also been possible.⁴⁷⁰ However, the negative verdict given by Paul towards eating sacrificial meat in a false temple seems to jar against this (1 Cor 8.10-13).⁴⁷¹ Additionally, numerous temple shrines might appear at odds with the exclusivism and focus on the Jerusalem temple that characterised Jewish religion.⁴⁷² In light of this, a 'house-church' environment seems more likely.⁴⁷³ This would also appear to share a greater degree

⁴⁶⁸ Page 56.

⁴⁶⁹ See Marshall, *Supper*, 110; Hurtado, *Origins*, 26 and Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, 'House-Churches and the Eucharist,' in Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (eds.), *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, 129-138.

⁴⁷⁰ See Hurtado, *Origins*, 27.

⁴⁷¹ See Marshall, *Supper*, 118 and Hurtado, *Origins*, 27.

⁴⁷² However, synagogues also appear widespread in the diaspora during the first century (see Acts 18.4). Hurtado, *Origins*, 29-30.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid*, 41-42. This might also help explain why 'in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry' (1 Cor 11) as one could imagine the hosts of particularly large gatherings to be quite wealthy. See Marshall, *Supper*, 108-109; Hurtado, *Origins*, 41-42 and Bradley Blue, 'Acts and the House Church,' in David W. Gill and Conrad Gempf (eds.), *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, volume 2, Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1994, 119-222, 177.

of similarity with a domestic Passover.⁴⁷⁴

While the Lord's Supper might have shared a similar ethos in that it attempted to ensure its adherence to monotheistic religion, there are a few key differences in practice. First, the Passover happened annually whereas the Lord's Supper took place regularly;⁴⁷⁵ perhaps also advancing the argument that the early disciples felt under no compulsion to re-enact a Passover meal every time they took the Lord's Supper. Second, even a domestic Passover meal appears to have centred toward Jerusalem.⁴⁷⁶ The Lord's Supper does not appear to have had the same kind of focal point.⁴⁷⁷ Therefore, the practice of Lord's Supper appears different to the Passover in terms of location. We will now address the day on which the occasions took place.

6.2.4 *The day*

In Acts it says, 'On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread' (20.7). 1 Corinthians also says that 'Now concerning the collection for the saints... On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up' (16. 1-2a). What is striking about these passages is that they appear to offer no explanation as to why the first day of the week was singled out.⁴⁷⁸ Although it was suggested earlier in this chapter that 'the breaking of bread' (Acts 2.42) followed Jewish meal etiquette, this offered no explanation as to why the first day of the week was significant in particular. Perhaps the strongest contender to answer why the early church might have gathered on the first day of the week is because of the resurrection of

⁴⁷⁴ See Hurtado, *Origins*, 28.

⁴⁷⁵ See Marshall, *Supper*, 108.

⁴⁷⁶ Page 55.

⁴⁷⁷ This is hardly surprising given the growth of Christianity. That being said, one would imagine that the church in Jerusalem held a particularly special office (1 Cor 16.1-3).

⁴⁷⁸ See Marshall, *Supper*, 108.

Christ.⁴⁷⁹ We will return to address the purpose of such gatherings later in the chapter, for now our focus remains on the day itself.

In Revelation it says that 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day' (1.10). What is of particular interest is that in the Didache it says, 'Assemble on the Lord's Day, and break bread and offer the Eucharist' (*Did.* 14).⁴⁸⁰ There are a few aspects worth noting: first, both texts mention 'the Lord's day'. Second, it seems reasonable to take this as a reference to the first day of the week. Finally, the context of 'break bread' in the Didache is quite clearly the Lord's Supper, which might help explain why breaking bread on the first day of the week was particularly singled out in Acts 2.46. From the accumulative information we can deduce that it is likely the early church met on the first day of the week to share the Lord's Supper in view of the resurrection of Christ.⁴⁸¹

In terms of our discussion so far, this is the greatest difference between the Passover and the Lord's Supper. There appears no precedent for gatherings such as this in Jewish religion.⁴⁸² Although the first believers also appear to have kept certain ties with formal Jewish religion (Acts 2.46), gathering on the first day of the week rather than the sabbath indicates a radical reassessment of cultic devotion in light of Christ.⁴⁸³ Instead of looking back to the Exodus

⁴⁷⁹ Matt 28.1; Mark 16.2; Luke 24.1; John 20.1. See G.K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011, 816. For a wider discussion of Mark's longer ending, see Robert H. Stein, 'The Ending of Mark,' *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, volume 18, 2008, 79-98.

⁴⁸⁰ Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 197.

⁴⁸¹ Most of the argument here follows Dunn quite closely. Dunn, *Worship*, 49. That they also gave alms to the impoverished Christian community on the first day of week seems to be the case.

⁴⁸² Hence Hurtado says that 'Common meals, yes, as at Qumran. But meals devoted expressly to celebrating and perhaps communing with God's heavenly "chief agent" are not found in the records of ancient Jewish devotion'. Hurtado, *God*, 111-112.

⁴⁸³ See *ibid.* my wording here is borrowed from Hurtado. See Hurtado, 'Devotion', 3.

events, they would now recall the ultimate sacrifice of this new Passover lamb, the motifs taken over into the exaltation of Jesus.⁴⁸⁴ In order to discuss the purpose of such gatherings, we will now address the expressions of each meal.

6.2.5 Expressions

One noticeable difference between the Passover and the Lord's Supper might be how each meal expressed itself. Because of apparent differences, principally between the book of Acts and 1 Corinthians, 'These differences have led to a number of related theories suggesting that there were two differing types of meal celebration in the early church';⁴⁸⁵ a joyful celebration and a solemn rite (Acts 2.46; 1 Cor 11.26).⁴⁸⁶ Bradshaw adheres to an extension of such theories, arguing for an increased diversity in tradition and practice.⁴⁸⁷

The presence of 'divergent' practices in the first century appears likely.⁴⁸⁸ Dunn identifies two primary (Mark 14.22-24/Matt 26.26-28 and 1 Cor 11.24/Luke 22.19) and one possible (John 6.53-56) tradition for the words of interpretation at the Last Supper.⁴⁸⁹ Although Dunn does highlight diversity in the ordering of the elements,⁴⁹⁰ he does not discuss what could have caused the difference in the first place. It is possible that because of a developing ordering of cups in the Passover Seder, that confusion was caused by what words were spoken by

⁴⁸⁴ Page 68-69. See also Marshall, *Supper*, 80.

⁴⁸⁵ Marshall, *Supper*, 131.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ See page 31.

⁴⁸⁸ Dunn, *Unity*, 180.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, 181-182. While it has been argued that there existed further divergence, the premise is built on the shorter text of Luke being the original. On this note, it does appear that 'the longer text is probably original in Luke'. Dunn, *Unity*, 180 n. 24; Bradshaw, *Origins*, 3-5.

⁴⁹⁰ Dunn, *Unity*, 180.

Jesus over what cup (Luke 22.17-20).⁴⁹¹ This may account for why 1 Corinthians and the Didache contains a reversal of the bread-cup order (*Did.* 9; 1 Cor 10.16), although the Didache does not contain the words of institution.⁴⁹² Although it has been argued the reason for the reversed bread-cup order is found in the homily that Paul is producing,⁴⁹³ it appears difficult to discern what tangible difference this would have made to Paul's argument; particularly in view of the fact that his argument reverts back to the bread-cup order immediately after (1 Cor 10.17, 21).

In light of this, allowance should be made for both a bread-cup and cup-bread ordering of the elements in early Lord's Supper practice. This might have originated in the developing order of the cups used in the Passover meal and the resulting confusion around what words were spoken by Jesus over which cup. Although this might highlight a difference in *practice* between the Passover and the Lord's Supper, it may also indicate a similarity in *ethos* as both variants stem from the possible order of Jesus' words at the Last Supper.

While that may have been the case, there are also possible grounds for a difference in *ethos*. It has been argued that the exclusive purpose of the Lord's Supper in Acts was to joyfully celebrate the resurrection of Christ.⁴⁹⁴ The relevance for our purpose is that such views inadvertently remove the Lord's Supper from the death of Jesus and – by extension – the Passover.⁴⁹⁵ There are at least three arguments

⁴⁹¹ See Instone-Brewer, *Feasts*, 188.

⁴⁹² Bradshaw, *Origins*, 25-26.

⁴⁹³ Marshall, *Supper*, 119; Ernst Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, London: SCM Press, 1964, 110.

⁴⁹⁴ See Francis J. Moloney, *A Body Broken for a Broken People: Eucharist in the New Testament*, Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1990, 121 n. 1. See also Bradshaw, *Origins*, vii, 27.

⁴⁹⁵ Page 6-7.

against this being the case.⁴⁹⁶ First, it would appear an argument from silence:

In light of the Emmaus story we may well feel that the experience of the presence of the risen Lord was a determinative factor (*cf.* Luke 24:41), and it has often been suggested that this was the decisive element in the meals described in Acts. However, it may be worth emphasising that this point is not made explicitly in Acts and remains a matter of inference. We should, therefore, be wary of asserting that the post-resurrection meals in Acts were primarily occasions for celebrating the presence of the risen Lord; to say this is to run beyond the evidence.⁴⁹⁷

With regard to the Emmaus road experience, this takes us to our second point. It is worth drawing attention to what caught the disciples' attention in the first place: 'When he [Jesus] was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him' (Luke 24.30-31). Not only do the disciples appear here to recall the particular way Jesus broke bread on earlier occasions,⁴⁹⁸ they were already familiar with the events concerning Jesus' death and crucifixion (Luke 24.20).⁴⁹⁹ In light of this, it would appear strange to promote a dichotomy between Lord's Supper practices predominantly shaped by either the death or resurrection of Jesus; especially when that does not appear evident in the texts themselves (Acts 10.41; 1 Cor 11.26).⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁶ I rely on Marshall for much of the findings that follow here. See Marshall, *Supper*, 123-133.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

⁴⁹⁸ See Atkinson, *Jesus*, 75.

⁴⁹⁹ This would still apply even if two of the disciples were not present at the Last Supper. See Clayton Raymond Bowen, 'The Emmaus Disciples and the Purposes of Luke,' *The Biblical World*, volume 35, 1910, 234-245, citing 239.

⁵⁰⁰ Hence Marshall says that 'the alleged antithesis between joyful celebrations of the Lord's presence and solemn memories of his death is a false one... the note of

This brings us to our final point: it is worth saying that any argument supporting the primacy of the resurrection in the fellowship meals in Acts works from basically the same material as a contrary argument would utilise:

The real problem boils down to the lack of mention of the death of Jesus in the accounts of the meals in Acts. But this is not really a problem. We have in fact only four references to such occasions in Acts, and they take the form of reports that such meals were held rather than descriptions of how the meals were held. The reader who has already become acquainted with the Gospel of Luke... should not need to be told the significance of the occasions in Acts when the disciples broke bread, especially when he remembered the command of Jesus at the Last Supper'.⁵⁰¹

Admittedly, this is addressing how the *reader* might have understood the breaking of bread as opposed to the practice of the community that lay *behind* the text. However, I would suggest that many of the points still readily apply, especially when one takes into consideration that 'Paul himself would have told us nothing about the theological significance of the Lord's Supper if he had not been compelled to do so by the situation in Corinth'.⁵⁰² If anything, the lively activity of the Corinthians might suggest that they had forgotten that the Lord's Supper is both a joyful celebration and a solemn rite (1 Cor 11.21).⁵⁰³

joy is present in the Pauline tradition in the expectation of the Lord's coming'. Marshall, *Supper*, 132.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid, 132.

⁵⁰² Ibid, 133.

⁵⁰³ Ibid, 132.

6.3 Implications

In this chapter we have been able to see the outworking of retaining a distinction between ethos and practice. Not only did it help clarify the similarities and differences between the Passover and the Lord's Supper, it also functioned as a helpful lens by which to clarify the origins and development of the Lord's Supper.⁵⁰⁴

At the outset of the chapter we said that there appears a striking contiguity in ethos between the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord's Supper in light of the looking-backward-and-forward dynamic to the new Exodus. However, we also said that there was a marked difference in practice between the Passover and Lord's Supper: namely in the use of water, the context of the meals, the location and gathering on the first day of the week, in view of the resurrection of Christ which indicated a radical reassessment of cultic devotion in light of Christ. I also said, regarding the use of water, that if the early disciples felt under no compulsion to re-enact a Passover meal every time they took the Lord's Supper then the absence of wine in some Lord's Supper practice need not prove too vexing. Furthermore, that may also extend to all the differences addressed in the chapter; hence the freedom to move from an annual to a regular celebration.

In light of all this, there are a few observations worth making: it appears that the presupposition which lies behind arguments that consider the Lord's Supper ethos as fragmented in the first century, is an implicit focus on *what* they did, rather than *why* they did it.⁵⁰⁵ This is no less the case than when we turn our attention to the fellowship meals in Acts. We have already noted that the Passover in the first

⁵⁰⁴ Page 6.

⁵⁰⁵ See Hurtado, *Lord*, 27.

century was a lively, family celebration.⁵⁰⁶ Additionally, the lamb was the centrepiece.⁵⁰⁷ While perhaps a somewhat contrived point, it is worth emphasising here that the celebration was a direct result of the sacrifice. To create a distance between cause and effect in the Passover could seem artificial. Yet, this might appear the logical consequence of arguments that promote a dichotomy between Lord's Supper practices predominantly shaped by either the death or resurrection of Jesus. What such arguments do not fully appreciate is *why* the early Christians came to regard the Lord's Supper as a celebration at all.

Earlier in this thesis, we discussed New Testament texts that collectively describe Jesus as the sacrificial lamb who atones for sin.⁵⁰⁸ Thus, Dunn said that 'the link between Jesus and the Passover was early on seen as important and instructive'.⁵⁰⁹ Earlier on, we also said that instead of looking back to the Exodus events, they (the early Christians) would now recall the ultimate sacrifice of this new Passover lamb, the motifs taken over into the exaltation of Jesus.⁵¹⁰ Marshall writes:

Jesus spoke in terms of fulfilment and newness, and thus indicated the end of the old Passover and its replacement by its fulfilment. Theologically, the Passover came to an end with this final celebration by Jesus, and when the church would later speak of celebrating the festival (1 Cor 5:7f) it would be a new Christian festival that was regarded as paschal only insofar as the Passover provided the typology for understanding the death of Jesus as an act of redemption.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁶ Page 11.

⁵⁰⁷ Page 67.

⁵⁰⁸ Page 37-38.

⁵⁰⁹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 773.

⁵¹⁰ Page 68-69.

⁵¹¹ Marshall, *Supper*, 80.

This might also help explain why the early believers felt the freedom to diverge from the practice of the Passover. Because they saw in Jesus a fulfilment of their hopes as to who the messiah would be, that his death and sacrifice alone could bring deliverance.⁵¹² This effectual ransom, which was vindicated through the resurrection,⁵¹³ gave the early church their reason to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

In addressing our key research questions, our answer to 'why did the Lord's Supper come about in the first place?' appears to be, 'because of the death and resurrection of Jesus'. The contiguity in ethos helped affirm a link between the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord's Supper through the death of Jesus. The similarity of the looking-backward-and-forward dynamic between the Passover and the Lord's Supper also helps answer, 'was the Lord's Supper affected by evocations of Jewish celebrations?' as 'yes'. Finally, envisaging the importance attributed to Jesus as the sacrificial lamb who atones for sin and the reason why the early Christians came to regard the Lord's Supper as a celebration, our answering of 'to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord's Supper during the first century?' would be, 'strongly'.⁵¹⁴ Not only that, our distinction between ethos and practice also made allowances for the differences evident in the development of the Lord's Supper in the first century.

While that might well be the case, it has been noted elsewhere that the Didache does not contain a link to the death of Jesus.⁵¹⁵ In view of this, let us now discuss any possible findings in the document and

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Hence Wright says that 'Among the first meanings which the resurrection opened up to the surprised disciples was that Israel's hope had been fulfilled'. N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, volume 3, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003, 726.

⁵¹⁴ Page 38-39.

⁵¹⁵ Page 33.

what light it could shed on the origins of the Lord's Supper.

7 The Didache and the Death of Jesus

Admittedly, there are factors that make attempting to determine a date for the Didache, appear to produce no more than vague impressions.⁵¹⁶ Nevertheless, we will attempt to build an argument for what I believe is an early-dated document.⁵¹⁷ It has been suggested that the apostle Paul may have known of the Didache, supported by his allusion to a reversal of the bread-cup order (1 Cor 10.16).⁵¹⁸ Because the Didache also contains the reversed cup order (*Did* 9), the argument follows that Paul was aware of communities where this took place.⁵¹⁹ Therefore, even if parts of the document are the fruit of redaction, the traditions contained within might 'precede the work of Paul in their origin'.⁵²⁰

7.1 Dating the Didache

While there appears a consensus that the eucharistic rite in the Didache is early in origin,⁵²¹ the conclusion that it antedated 1 Corinthians is not without difficulties. First, a distinction must be drawn between when the document was written and the tradition it stemmed from. It would be surprising to find such a detailed ritual of practice as the Didache in a predominantly oral culture if the document were as early as claimed.⁵²² Furthermore, any attempts to

⁵¹⁶ Clayton N. Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament*, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006, 20.

⁵¹⁷ While one could argue dependency on Paul, there are good reasons why the Didache might have come first. Page 102.

⁵¹⁸ Enrico Mazza, *The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1995, 92. Page 102.

⁵¹⁹ Bradshaw, *Origins*, London, 47.

⁵²⁰ Jefford, *Fathers*, 20.

⁵²¹ Willy Rordorf, 'The Didache,' in Matthew J. O'Connell (tr.), *The Eucharist of the Early Christians*, New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1978, 1-23, citing 2.

⁵²² Bradshaw, *Origins*, 46-47.

construct a possible situation outside of the text for why the need would have arisen is simply conjecture.⁵²³ Second, the presence of a different cup-order does not necessarily prove that the Didache predates 1 Corinthians. Nevertheless, the presence of a cup-bread order in 1 Corinthians and the Didache is striking. Moreover, presumably the practice of the Didache had taken place long before it was codified. In light of this, we may say that although it cannot be proven as a certainty, it is possible that the writer of 1 Corinthians was aware of such a tradition – in perhaps diverse contexts that would not exclude the community of the Didache. This would appear to navigate the argument in the direction of an early date for the document.

Another aspect that has bearing on our discussion is whether the Didache community had access to the oral tradition that brought the Gospel of Matthew. There is a consensus that there are scriptural citations or allusions in the document that appear in Matthew.⁵²⁴ If that were in fact the case, it could also strengthen the argument for an early dating of the Didache. However, this evidence could likewise be interpreted as supporting a later dating. If the Didache was dependant on the text of Matthew, it could not predate the Gospel; let alone 1 Corinthians. Ostensibly, this may seem the case but the argument dissipates if one considers the prospect of access to a common oral tradition.⁵²⁵ It has been argued that not only did the community have access to scraps of the Gospel of Matthew but that

⁵²³ Ibid, 38-39. Admittedly, Bradshaw favours a later date.

⁵²⁴ Jefford, *Fathers*, 21; see Lightfoot, *Fathers*, 146.

⁵²⁵ I don't think there is any dichotomy here between the universal authority found in the Gospel texts and the communities behind the texts. 'I see no difficulty, then, in merging the insights of oral tradition as community tradition and recognition of the importance of individual eyewitnesses in providing, contributing and in at least some measure helping to control the interpretation given to that tradition'. James D. G. Dunn, 'On History, Memory and Eyewitnesses: In Response to Bengt Holmberg and Samuel Byrskog,' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, volume 26, 2004, 473-487, citing 484.

the Gospel itself may have been written in the Didache community.⁵²⁶ This would certainly help to address why the Didache was familiar with Matthew. The difficulty found in the argument is that it is dependent on the Gospel of Matthew and the Didache having a shared locality.⁵²⁷ Even if that were the case, the precise location where the Gospel was written is disputed.⁵²⁸ However, it has to be admitted that Antioch could prove a fair estimate.⁵²⁹ The shared Jewish influence of both documents could strengthen the case of a shared locality, although in some respects the tenets required may not prove exclusive to Antioch.⁵³⁰ That being said – bearing in mind the similarity between parts of Matthew and the Didache – there appears no strong reason why the texts could not have a shared geographical origin.

Because the Gospel of Matthew is dated anywhere from the early sixties upwards in the first century,⁵³¹ this could indicate an early date for the Didache. While that might appear the case, allusions to Matthew do not necessitate that the Didache community drew on a tradition common to Matthew. In order to address this more fully, a brief discussion concerning the apparent Jewish context of both documents, and the partings of the ways, is necessary.

7.1.1 *The Partings of the Ways*

The phrase 'the partings of the ways' refers to the period where Christianity emerged as a distinct religion as opposed to a sect within

⁵²⁶ Jefford, *Fathers*, 21.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ See R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*, Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1989, 93.

⁵²⁹ Ibid, 92.

⁵³⁰ Jefford, *Fathers*, 21.

⁵³¹ France, *Matthew*, 83.

the Judaism of the first century.⁵³² It has been argued that one cannot determine a precise moment in history where this separation took place; rather, a tension can be detected throughout the first century that took course over time.⁵³³ In light of this, scholars have argued that the context of the Didache befits such a historical setting.⁵³⁴ The Didache complements a thoroughly Jewish - yet tense - setting. Firstly, the document appears highly influenced by the Old Testament, perhaps an indication of dependence on Jewish thought;⁵³⁵ secondly, because of the presence of traditional Jewish blessings. However, it is worth briefly addressing a 'bone of contention'.

It has long been recognised that the Didache prayers (*Did.* 9-10) have a striking resemblance to Jewish blessings in the first century.⁵³⁶ While that appears the case, Bradshaw criticises attempts to find any sturdy parallels, holding that 'in any case' they 'are of very dubious value' and that 'There is a Jewish connection, but it is not in narrow literary terms'.⁵³⁷ While Bradshaw is perhaps right to criticise scholars for not possessing a full awareness of the nuances of the text,⁵³⁸ it is ill-conceived to suggest that the prayers do not provide a considerable strength to claiming the Jewish grounding of the Didache. Not only does the variety of Jewish blessings testify that it was immersed in that culture⁵³⁹ but the New Testament evidences that there was

⁵³² Dunn, *Partings*, xi.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Marcello Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism: Jewish Roots of an Ancient Christian-Jewish Work*, London: T. and T. Clark, 2004, 263.

⁵³⁵ See Bradshaw, *Origins*, 40-42.

⁵³⁶ Ibid, 32.

⁵³⁷ Ibid, 33, 35.

⁵³⁸ Ibid, 33-34.

⁵³⁹ Paul F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church: A Study of the Origin and Early Development of the Divine Office*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1981, 12-17.

fluidity as to how the prayers were expressed (Matt 14.19; 15.36, Luke 22.19; 24.30).⁵⁴⁰ The final note in regard to the partings of the ways is the reference to the Lord's Day, 'Assemble on the Lord's Day, and break bread and offer the Eucharist' (*Did.* 14).⁵⁴¹ As argued previously, that indicated a radical reassessment of cultic devotion in light of Christ that appears to have had no Jewish predecessor.⁵⁴² Thus, we can see that although the *Didache* retains a Jewish flavour, it also demonstrates radical readjustment: akin to the partings of the ways.⁵⁴³ Because of the tensions expressed in Matthew in respect to the author's relationship to Judaism,⁵⁴⁴ a shared concern with the *Didache* would appear plausible.

7.1.2 *Ignatius*

There is one other concern to address, namely the bearing Ignatius might have on our discussion. It has been argued that because Ignatius originated from Antioch, it would appear strange that his letters fail to refer to the *Didache*.⁵⁴⁵ While that could appear to dismantle the argument for the provenance of the *Didache* being Antioch, it may have less weight than first thought. It has been argued that Ignatius knew of an early form of the *Didache*.⁵⁴⁶ Even if that were not the case, it could be said that the Jewish rhetoric of the writing was diametrically opposed to the evidently anti-Jewish

⁵⁴⁰ In a different context, see Paul Foster, 'Why Did Matthew Get the Shema Wrong? A Study of Matthew 22:37,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, volume 122, 2003, 309-333, citing 332 n. 76.

⁵⁴¹ Louth, *Fathers*, 197.

⁵⁴² Page 100-101.

⁵⁴³ For more reasons why the partings of the ways could prove a fitting context, see Jefford, *Fathers*, 21-22.

⁵⁴⁴ France, *Matthew*, 95.

⁵⁴⁵ See Jefford, *Fathers*, 21-22.

⁵⁴⁶ Clayton N. Jefford, 'Did Ignatius of Antioch Know the *Didache*?,' in Clayton N. Jefford (ed.), *The Didache in Context: Essays on its Text, History and Transmission*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995, 330-351, citing 350.

polemic of Ignatius.⁵⁴⁷ Therefore, one could say that Ignatius had different invested interests to that of the Didache.

Our discussion of Ignatius draws us to our final point around the context of the Didache, the *Agape* meal.⁵⁴⁸ The love feast appears in the New Testament (Jude 12), perhaps reminiscent of the situation in 1 Corinthians.⁵⁴⁹ Ignatius refers to a love feast also, appearing to take the term as synonymous with the Eucharist (Ign. *Smyrn.* 8).⁵⁵⁰ The reason why the love feast pertains to our discussion is that it has been argued that the Eucharist in the Didache contains an *Agape* antecedent to the Eucharist proper⁵⁵¹ (*Did.* 9; 14) or does not contain the real Eucharist altogether.⁵⁵² There are a few points that one could make here: first, although it seems ‘we know all too little about’ the *Agape*,⁵⁵³ the consensus appears that ‘in *Didache* 9-10’ is ‘the Christian Eucharistic meal’.⁵⁵⁴ Second, it appears curious to argue for a sharp distinction between the *Agape* and the Lord’s Supper. In view of this, Mazza says that ‘To ask if the ritual meal of the *Didache* is Eucharist or agape is to pose a question that is mistaken... the two rites were fused together’.⁵⁵⁵ That the two parts were separate in later centuries appears the case.⁵⁵⁶ It is possible that Paul may have advocated a

⁵⁴⁷ Thomas A. Robinson, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Parting of the Ways: Early Jewish-Christian Relations*, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009, 104.

⁵⁴⁸ Meaning ‘love’. Arndt and Gingrich, *Lexicon*, 5-6.

⁵⁴⁹ Marshall, *Supper*, 110-111.

⁵⁵⁰ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 30.

⁵⁵¹ Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 143.

⁵⁵² See Bradshaw, *Origins*, 29-30.

⁵⁵³ Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 188. See also Andrew McGowan, ‘Naming the Feast: The Agape and the diversity of early Christian meals,’ in Elizabeth A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica*, volume 30, Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1997, 314-318, citing 314.

⁵⁵⁴ Mazza, *Origins*, 26, italics original; Bradshaw, *Search*, 159 n. 113; Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 188. Incidentally, the title ‘Christian’ is actually in the Didache (*Did.* 12).

⁵⁵⁵ Mazza, *Origins*, 26 n. 40, italics original.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid and Marshall, *Supper*, 111.

separation in response to the abuses at Corinth (1 Cor 11.22, 33-34).⁵⁵⁷ Consequently, this may also support an early date for the Didache.

In light of all this, it would appear injudicious to make distinctions between the *Agape* and eucharistic practice too strongly.⁵⁵⁸ Having discussed issues around the date and context of the Didache, finding an early date and Jewish context most plausible, let us now move towards the death of Jesus.

7.2 Didache 9.4 and the Death of Jesus

There is one aspect of the Lord's Supper – especially with regard to the Didache – that I find fascinating: there appears a consensus that the writing does not contain any link to the death of Christ.⁵⁵⁹ This has led certain scholars to conclude that there were early eucharistic communities that did not connect the bread and cup to the death of Christ,⁵⁶⁰ no less any ceremonial connection to the body and blood of Jesus Christ.⁵⁶¹ While there might appear merits to the argument, I hope to indicate where the argument might have been asserted too strongly. In order to proceed any further in our discussion, I think it would be helpful to give an overview of the discussion so far, in order that one can build the argument with an appreciation of the historical and theological vehicles that helped give it credence.

⁵⁵⁷ See Marshall, *Supper*, 110.

⁵⁵⁸ Rordorf does state that the *Agape* and the Eucharist were not 'separated' during the period of the Didache. Nevertheless, he draws a clear distinction between the supposedly two entities. Rordorf, 'Didache', 15.

⁵⁵⁹ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 60; Hans Lietzmann, *Mass and Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979, 193; Dennis E. Smith and Hal E. Taussig, *Many Tables: The Eucharist in the New Testament and Liturgy Today*, London: SCM Press, 1990, 66-67.

⁵⁶⁰ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 14-15.

⁵⁶¹ Although his target is contemporary debate, the point of the argument indicates that 'the early concern was with' what the 'actual object' signified. Thomas O'Loughlin, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2010, 96.

The argument stems around one verse that reads, 'Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and became one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever' (*Did.* 9.4).⁵⁶² The consensus appears that the verse should be taken as a broad eschatological affirmation.⁵⁶³ However, opinion differs as to what informs the verse. One view is that the verse draws from different texts in the Old Testament that describe an ingathering of Israel at the end of time from the four winds.⁵⁶⁴ Others favour the bread analogy of the church by the apostle Paul (1 Cor 10.17) and understand the verse to be effectively another take on the idea.⁵⁶⁵ While we will return to discuss the two suggestions, our purpose for now is to simply pose a question: could one take the verse as referring to something entirely different?

Relatively early in the twentieth century, while discussing possible liturgical 'formulae' that lay behind the *Didache*, J. Armitage Robinson espoused the argument that the wording of the verse was borrowed from the Gospel of John.⁵⁶⁶ He continued to say that 'I think we shall find that the Gospel of St John has been directly used here and elsewhere in the book'.⁵⁶⁷ Although it could be said that there appears precious little elsewhere in the *Didache* to strengthen the hypothesis, the possibility of a Johannine reminiscence – perhaps rather through oral tradition – should not be discounted. The argument was developed further by Erwin R. Goodenough who,

⁵⁶² Lightfoot, *Fathers*, 154.

⁵⁶³ Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 149; Bradshaw, *Origins*, 36; Rordorf, 'Didache', 18.

⁵⁶⁴ See Bradshaw, *Origins*, 37.

⁵⁶⁵ O'Loughlin, *Didache*, 98.

⁵⁶⁶ J. Armitage Robinson, *Barnabas, Hermas and the Didache*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920, 93.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

while defending the belief that John should be taken 'to be a primitive Gospel',⁵⁶⁸ argued that the verse in the Didache should be taken as a reference to the Johannine account of the Feeding of the Five Thousand (John 6.1-15).⁵⁶⁹ Although one could fairly deem the considerations of Goodenough in respect to an early date for John as eccentric, the claim that the Didache alludes to the Johannine feeding may bear more weight. It was the opinion of the influential scholar P. Gardner-Smith⁵⁷⁰ that the miraculous event in 'John has an independent tradition'.⁵⁷¹ Indeed, if the Johannine account drew from a differing tradition then one could admit the possibility that the Didache drew from that variant tradition also.⁵⁷² This would appear to bolster the claim somewhat, although I will briefly address in further detail possible traditions later in the chapter.

The belief that the Didache should be understood as having referred to the Johannine feeding was valiantly argued by C. F. D. Moule. He, after a discussion on a perceived difficulty in a possible interpretation of the verse in question, stated that 'the difficulties largely disappear' if taken as a reference to the bread broken at 'the feeding of the multitude'.⁵⁷³ The view that the verse in the Didache refers to the Johannine feeding has not received acceptance from all.⁵⁷⁴ In his

⁵⁶⁸ Erwin R. Goodenough, 'John a Primitive Gospel,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, volume 64, 1945, 145-182, citing 181.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 174.

⁵⁷⁰ 'a book which at least shows how fragile are the arguments by which the dependence of John on the other Gospels has been "proved", and makes a strong case for its independence'. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1968, 449 n. 2. For the book referred to, see the note below.

⁵⁷¹ P. Gardner-Smith, *The Christ of the Gospels: A Study of the Gospel Records in the Light of Critical Research*, Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons Limited, 1938, 132.

⁵⁷² Although not convinced by a Johannine reminiscence, Niederwimmer says that a relation between the Didache and a certain verse in John 'can be adequately explained by their dependence on a common liturgical tradition'. Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 152 n. 66.

⁵⁷³ C. F. D. Moule, 'A Note on Didache IX. 4,' *Journal of Theological Studies*, volume 6, 1955, 240-243, citing 242.

⁵⁷⁴ Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 152 n. 66.

article written on the topic, A. Vööbus attacked the thesis heavily, asserting that 'The imagery in the Didache shows absolutely no vestige of the governing idea exhibited in the Johannine episode'.⁵⁷⁵ In order to fairly address the concerns of Vööbus, I hope to offer a fresh insight into the discussion that will refer to his argument throughout. Although I am indebted to the scholars listed above for their illuminating discussions, the method by which I arrived at certain conclusions was entirely different and therefore my argument has a different focus.⁵⁷⁶

The hypothesis started out life in my pursuit of the historical Jesus. In the years that have followed since the writers listed above first discussed a Johannine reference in the Didache, what one could perhaps articulate as a 'revolution' in historical Jesus studies has flourished.⁵⁷⁷ This sentiment has also been expressed in relation to study of 'what Jewish worship was like in the first century of the Common Era'.⁵⁷⁸ It could be argued that the relatively recent developments here should produce a caution to lay hold of any outlandish claim. However, if exercised wisely it could produce the opposite effect; providing fresh insight and producing further, stimulating discussion. I am convicted of the latter and will endeavour to describe my argument as clearly as possible, while addressing any foreseeable objections.

⁵⁷⁵ A. Vööbus, 'Regarding the Background of the Liturgical Traditions in the Didache: The Question of Literary Relation between Didache IX,4 and the Fourth Gospel,' *Vigiliae Christianae*, volume 23, 1969, 81-87, citing 87.

⁵⁷⁶ Since I originally wrote this chapter, I have come across the work of Stewart who draws similar conclusions that I do. However, he does not go far enough to suggest that Didache 9.4 is an implicit reference to the death of Christ. Alistair C. Stewart, 'The Fragment on the Mountain: A Note on Didache 9.4a,' *Neotestamentica*, volume 49, 2015, 175-188, citing 182.

⁵⁷⁷ See Eddy, 'Quest', 53. I confess that I have borrowed my wording here from a book on a different topic matter. Bradshaw, *Search*, 1.

⁵⁷⁸ Bradshaw, *Search*, 1. This is especially relevant as the context of discussion found here is highlighting the distance in thought from the argument of C. F. D. Moule, who was referred to earlier in our discussion, to more recent views.

I suggested above that not only could John have drawn his account of the feeding miracle from an independent tradition but that the Didache and John could have had exposure to that very tradition. What if that tradition reflected the intention of the historical Jesus? It was argued earlier that Jesus indicated the character of his death and how it was to be later understood during the Feeding of the Crowds.⁵⁷⁹ 'Even without the Johannine discourse, the wording of the Gospel accounts suggests that the writers or their sources had come to understand, as the Disciples at the time did not, that in the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus was in a veiled way predicting his death'.⁵⁸⁰ I also argued that even if such an understanding did not come directly from the historical Jesus, one may trace it retrospectively from his death. However, to create what could appear an artificial dichotomy between the thought of Jesus and the early church has received criticism.⁵⁸¹

The strength in the argument is that it does not necessitate a tie to the Johannine feeding solely, rather the depiction could validly draw from different Gospel texts *or* oral tradition.⁵⁸² It has been argued that because *oros*⁵⁸³ occurs in the Johannine account (John 6.3, 15) and the Didache (*Did.* 9.4), that the Didache betrays an influence of the fourth Gospel but 'not the Synoptics'.⁵⁸⁴ Vööbus criticises the argument by directing the reader towards the fact that 'the same references also occur in the Matthaean account'.⁵⁸⁵ Vööbus is right to criticise the

⁵⁷⁹ Page 89-90.

⁵⁸⁰ Atkinson, *Jesus*, 77.

⁵⁸¹ Hurtado, 'Devotion', 2. In a similar vein, see Atkinson, *Jesus*, 77 and Pitre, *Jesus*, 79-80.

⁵⁸² I hope that if the early date I argue for the Didache is uncomfortable, then one may concede the notion on the basis that this understanding would have embedded into the community through Gospel tradition, and subsequently characterised their beliefs.

⁵⁸³ 'mountain' or 'hill'. Arndt and Gingrich, *Lexicon*, 582.

⁵⁸⁴ Moule, 'Note', 242.

⁵⁸⁵ Vööbus, 'Background', 82.

dismissal of the synoptic accounts by Moule. While one could think that it weakens the argument for a feeding reference in the Didache, it actually strengthens it.

Not only does the term for mountain feature in the account of John as cited above but the term also occurs in Mark and Matthew (Mark 6.46; Matthew 14.23; 15.29).⁵⁸⁶ It should be noted that the first verse in John occurs right before the Feeding of the Five Thousand, whereas the second occurs after the miracle. The verse in Mark and the first verse in Matthew are after the Feeding of the Five Thousand but the second verse in Matthew is shortly before the Feeding of the Four Thousand. Bearing this in mind, it would be plausible to take the verse in the Didache as a broader reference to a significant event in the life of the historical Jesus. Because it is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels and evidently meant a great deal to all the writers,⁵⁸⁷ it would not prove a great stretch of the imagination to suppose that the miracle circulated as a popular story by oral tradition in the community as the result of various testimony.⁵⁸⁸

7.2.1 Didache and the messianic banquet

Another argument which may help strengthen a reference to the Feedings of the Crowds in Didache 9.4 are the apparent common motifs of the messianic banquet.⁵⁸⁹ It was noted earlier in the chapter that the verse has been taken as broad eschatological affirmation. Additionally, there appears a consensus that the broader context is 'an anticipation of the messianic banquet of the coming Kingdom of God'.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁶ Goodenough, 'John', 174 n. 48.

⁵⁸⁷ Page 70.

⁵⁸⁸ Goodenough, 'John', 174 n. 48.

⁵⁸⁹ Page 41.

⁵⁹⁰ Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 188; Stewart, 'Fragment', 176.

It is striking that the motifs of a festal celebration, a gathering at the end of time and the ultimate establishment of God's reign all appear present (*Did.* 9; 10).⁵⁹¹ Earlier in the thesis it was argued that Jesus is the prophet king at the Feeding of the Five Thousand anticipating the great banquet and intentionally extending the blessings of inclusion in the messianic banquet to the gentiles in the Feeding of the Four Thousand.⁵⁹² In light of this, Stewart says that 'The eschatological plenty of the messianic age is prefigured in the Didachistic Eucharist as it had been in the multiplication of the loaves'.⁵⁹³ With regard to the motif of a messiah figure, we find an insightful passage a little earlier:

At the Eucharist, offer the eucharistic prayer in this way. Begin with the chalice: We give thanks to thee, our Father, for the holy Vine of thy servant David, which thou hast made known to us through thy servant Jesus (*Did* 9).⁵⁹⁴

There are at least four aspects worth drawing attention to: firstly, with regard to 'Thy servant David', the eschatological deliverer and Jesus functioning as servant king at the Last Supper was argued earlier in the thesis.⁵⁹⁵ Secondly, the vine imagery suggests the use of 'eucharistic wine' in the *Didache*.⁵⁹⁶ Not only was wine included in the Passover Seder, the synoptics record Jesus as saying, 'Truly, I say

⁵⁹¹ 'to all men thou hast given meat and drink to enjoy', 'gather it [the Church] from the four winds into the kingdom which thou hast prepared for it' and 'maranatha', which is 'Aramaic for "Our Lord, come!"': an early Christian prayer for the return of Christ' (1 Cor 16.22). The final judgement of God may also be present in 'deliver it from all evil' (*Did.* 10). At any rate, it seems evident later on: 'his judgement lies with God' (*Did.* 11). Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 195, 198 n. 7, 196. See also Stewart, 'Fragment', 185.

⁵⁹² Page 90.

⁵⁹³ Stewart, 'Fragment', 185.

⁵⁹⁴ Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 194.

⁵⁹⁵ Page 65. See also Stewart, 'Fragment', 185.

⁵⁹⁶ Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 198 n. 4.

to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God'.⁵⁹⁷ This helped us to argue that Jesus utilized the eschatological expectations around the messianic banquet to explain the nature of his ministry and that he intended to share a Passover meal with his disciples at the proper time in order to indicate the character of his imminent death and how it was to be correctly understood.⁵⁹⁸ It is significant that the Last Supper and the Didache both share messianic banquet motifs – particularly a messiah figure – and the use of wine imagery. In view of this, 'some have traced an echo of the original last supper in the *Didache*'.⁵⁹⁹

Thirdly, it has been argued that the Didache appears to 'portray a 7 fold action' that 'took bread', 'gave thanks *over* it', 'broke it', 'distributed it', 'took cup', 'gave thanks' and 'distributed it'.⁶⁰⁰ Earlier in the thesis we noted that there were remarkable parallels present between the Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Last Supper. Not only do the two occasions utilize a common Jewish table prayer, both contain the order of bread Jesus blessed, broke and gave and the Feeding of the Four Thousand has a potentially stronger parallel in that Jesus broke, giving thanks and gave.⁶⁰¹ We have already argued for the presence of traditional Jewish blessings in the Didache earlier in this chapter.

Fourthly, that the Didache contains a reversal of the bread-cup order (*Did.* 9; 1 Cor 10.16; Luke 22.17-20) was noted. While initially this could appear to challenge a seven-fold pattern, it was argued earlier

⁵⁹⁷ Mark 14.25; Matt 26.29; Luke 22.18.

⁵⁹⁸ Page 65-66.

⁵⁹⁹ See McKnight, *Jesus*, 329 n. 14, italics original.

⁶⁰⁰ Went, 'Passover'. See also Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London: Continuum, 2005, 48.

⁶⁰¹ Page 80.

that allowance should be made for both a bread-cup and cup-bread ordering of the elements in early Lord's Supper practice.⁶⁰² I also suggested that this may have indicated a similarity in *ethos* as both variants stem from the possible order of Jesus' words at the Last Supper.⁶⁰³

All our findings here are starting to build towards the conclusion that Didache 9.4 may be taken as an implicit reference to the death of Jesus. The strength of the argument might be that it would help explain why a reference to the Feedings of the Crowds would be found in the middle of a eucharistic liturgy. It would also help to address the messianic banquet motifs – particularly a messiah figure – and the use of wine imagery in common with the Last Supper, the parallels that appear in the Jewish blessings and the actions of sharing bread and wine between the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Last Supper and the Didache and, finally, why the Didache contains a cup-bread ordering of the elements.

There is a perceived weakness in the argument: it was noted earlier that the Didache does not contain the words of institution.⁶⁰⁴ In view of this, Bradshaw has been cited as saying 'that the historical setting of the sayings or any close link with the death of Christ was not regarded as of importance in early traditions of Eucharistic thought'.⁶⁰⁵ As cited earlier in the thesis, Marshall said:

The real problem boils down to the lack of mention of the death of Jesus in the accounts of the meals in Acts. But this is not really a problem. We have in fact only four references to such occasions in

⁶⁰² Page 101-102.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Bradshaw, *Origins*, 14-15. Page 37.

Acts, and they take the form of reports that such meals were held rather than descriptions of how the meals were held.⁶⁰⁶

That could also be true of the Didache. Louth says that '*The Didache* falls into two parts... The second... gives directions about... the celebration of the Eucharist'.⁶⁰⁷ It was argued earlier that the presupposition which lies behind arguments that consider the Lord's Supper ethos as fragmented in the first century, is an implicit focus on *what* they did, rather than *why* they did it.⁶⁰⁸ Perhaps this also applies to the study of the Didache. With regard to the words of institution, Hurtado argues:

We should not presume that the Eucharist meals in all Christian circles included these words. Moreover, in some circles at least, they may have functioned originally not as part of what was said during the meal, but as part of the instructions to converts about the meaning of the meal.⁶⁰⁹

It appears plausible that the words of institution may have originally functioned as part of an introduction to the believing community. Commenting on the parallel between 1 Corinthians 11.23 and 15.3, Thiselton says, 'That Christ died for our sins in terms of this explanatory framework of understanding... belongs to the bedrock of pre-Pauline apostolic doctrine, going back to Jesus himself'.⁶¹⁰ In view of this, one could say that the focus of Paul's 'instructions' (1 Cor 11.17) is to exhort the Corinthians to take the Lord's Supper in a

⁶⁰⁶ Marshall, *Supper*, 132. Page 104.

⁶⁰⁷ Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 187-188.

⁶⁰⁸ Page 105-106.

⁶⁰⁹ Hurtado, *Lord*, 616. See also Andrew Brian McGowen, 'Is there a Liturgical Text in this Gospel?': The Institution Narratives and their Early Interpretive Communities,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, volume 118, 1999, 73-87, citing 79-80.

⁶¹⁰ Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006, 257.

manner fitting to Christ's death, rather than superimpose any additional liturgical constraints.⁶¹¹

In light of this, the absence of the words of institution does not appear to negate that Didache 9.4 may be taken as an implicit reference to the death of Jesus.⁶¹² Having put forward our argument and addressed a perceived weakness, we will now turn our attention to wider criticisms of the argument.

7.3 Vööbus and arguments against a miracle reference in Didache 9.4

Vööbus argues that the term *klasma*, meaning 'fragment' or 'piece',⁶¹³ does not occur in the Gospel of John and asserts 'that any supposed relationship between the Johannine language and that used in the Didache is an exercise in futility'.⁶¹⁴ Vööbus is technically right to specify that the particular form of the word does not occur in the Johannine feeding. However, the argument is dubious: whilst the singular does not appear, the plural *klasmata* does (John 6.12).⁶¹⁵ It should be stated in clear terms that I am not trying to argue that the Didache has tried to replicate the language in the Gospel texts, rather that the imagery in Didache 9.4 came from a common tradition.⁶¹⁶ The Gospels are intent on depicting historical events involving many loaves, whereas the Didache concerns a single 'eucharistic loaf'

⁶¹¹ McGowen, 'Text', 80.

⁶¹² Even Bradshaw himself admits that 'the rite in the *Didache* may not spell out the connection in its text, but that does not prove that those using it did not make the link for themselves'. Bradshaw, *Origins*, 60.

⁶¹³ Arndt and Gingrich, *Lexicon*, 433.

⁶¹⁴ Vööbus, 'Background', 82.

⁶¹⁵ Moule, 'Note', 242.

⁶¹⁶ Hence Louth says that '*The Didache* does not look contrived and in particular its use of the Gospel tradition in an unsettled, oral form prior to its being fixed by the influence of the canonical Gospels'. Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 189.

broken for the community.⁶¹⁷

While that might appear to settle the matter, Vööbus argues that the Didache verse should be amended to *artos*, 'bread',⁶¹⁸ rather than *klasma*.⁶¹⁹ It is fascinating to note that not only does *klasma* occur in the verse cited but also a few verses earlier (*Did.* 9.1, 4).⁶²⁰ Admittedly, there appears a strength in the argument as *artos* is the term found in 1 Corinthians where Paul discusses the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 10.17).⁶²¹ The text says that 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread'.⁶²² It could be argued that the Didache should be taken in the manner of 1 Corinthians.

Although that may appear a strong argument, there are valid reasons to doubt that conclusion: firstly, there should be an indication in the text that it should be read that way, rather than to date various parts of the document as later additions unnecessarily.⁶²³ Secondly, even if *artos* was deemed a better rendering, it does not address the references to 'mountains', 'scattered' and 'gathered' that appear in Didache 9.4 but not in 1 Corinthians 10.17.⁶²⁴ One could also apply in equal measure the logic cited to the claim that the Didache 9.4 resembles Old Testament imagery. The absence of bread imagery in gathering eschatological Israel appears to steer towards determining that the text in the Didache is primarily referring to something

⁶¹⁷ Moule, 'Note', 242.

⁶¹⁸ Arndt and Gingrich, *Lexicon*, 110.

⁶¹⁹ Vööbus, 'Background', 83. See also Stewart, 'Fragment', 177.

⁶²⁰ Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 148; Bradshaw, *Origins*, 24 n. 1.

⁶²¹ Moule, 'Note', 240.

⁶²² Taken from NRSV.

⁶²³ This appears the sentiment of Bradshaw at various points. Bradshaw, *Origins*, 37-39.

⁶²⁴ See Moule, 'Note', 241.

different; in turn, strengthening the argument for the feeding miracles.

There is one final part of the argument of Vööbus that will be addressed. Vööbus argues that the eucharistic focus in the Gospel of John and the community focus in the Didache are mutually exclusive to one another, saying that 'In the Didache, however, the subject matter is not the sacramental substance but the congregation itself'.⁶²⁵ While the argument of Vööbus referred to thus far has retained some merit in different respects, one could fairly consider the argument cited here as dubious. Not only does the miracle centre on provision for the five thousand (John 6.10-11) but that the rite in the Didache is over the bread (*Did.* 9.4). To divorce, rather unnaturally, the substance from the recipients in the texts cited appears imprudent. In short, none of the arguments put forward by Vööbus appear to undermine the argument that Didache 9.4 may be taken as an implicit reference to the death of Jesus.

7.3.1 Summary

There is an outstanding query from our discussion in this chapter: one of our key research questions is 'to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord's Supper during the first century?'. One could argue that the Passover only appears indirectly in the Didache. However, this is not insurmountable.

In the Didache it says, 'Do not keep the same fast-days as the hypocrites' (*Did.* 8).⁶²⁶ Louth comments that 'the hypocrites' are 'Christians who followed the Jewish feasts and not the ones *The*

⁶²⁵ Vööbus, 'Background', 87.

⁶²⁶ Louth and Staniforth, *Fathers*, 194.

Didache regards as Christian'.⁶²⁷ It was argued above that although the *Didache* retains a Jewish flavour, it also demonstrates radical readjustment: akin to the partings of the ways. It was also argued earlier that the early church saw in Jesus a fulfilment of their hopes as to who the messiah would be, that his death and sacrifice alone could bring deliverance.⁶²⁸ In light of this, it would be hardly surprising if the *Didache* displayed vestiges of a difference in *practice*:

Theologically, the Passover came to an end with this final celebration by Jesus, and when the church would later speak of celebrating the festival (1 Cor 5:7f) it would be a new Christian festival that was regarded as paschal only insofar as the Passover provided the typology for understanding the death of Jesus as an act of redemption.⁶²⁹

It was argued earlier on that the Passover and Jesus' death were strongly present in the belief of Paul and the church of the first century, in light of New Testament texts that collectively describe Jesus as the sacrificial lamb who atones for sin.⁶³⁰ As a result, one could say that the *Didache* retains a contiguity in *ethos*. This would also explain the messianic banquet motifs – particularly a messiah figure – and the use of wine imagery in common with the Last Supper; likewise the parallels that appear in the Jewish blessings and the actions of sharing bread and wine between the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Last Supper and the *Didache*; finally, why the *Didache* contains a cup-bread ordering of the elements.

At any rate, it was argued above that the presupposition which lies

⁶²⁷ Ibid, 198 n. 2, italics original.

⁶²⁸ 107.

⁶²⁹ Marshall, *Supper*, 80.

⁶³⁰ Page 37-39.

behind arguments that consider the Lord's Supper ethos as fragmented in the first century, is an implicit focus on *what* they did, rather than *why* they did it. Consequently, it does not appear sufficient to advocate an absence of the Passover *ethos* on the basis of silence in their *practice*. On balance, I believe there is a good case to contend that Didache 9.4 may be taken as an implicit reference to the death of Jesus.

8 Conclusion

At the start of the thesis, I intended to argue that the origins and development of the Lord's Supper are best understood through a Jewish prism. In our attempt to address this, we started determining which documents reflected the first century. This led us in the next chapter to discuss key authors and ideas which helped shape the thesis. Notably, Bradshaw said, 'that the historical setting of the sayings or any close link with the death of Christ was not regarded as of importance in early traditions of Eucharistic thought'.⁶³¹ It was here that we answered, 'to what extent did the Passover influence the ethos of the Lord's Supper during the first century?' by arguing that the Passover and Jesus' death were strongly present in the belief of Paul and the church of the first century.

The next chapter focussed on evidence regarding the messianic banquet which answered the question, 'was the Lord's Supper affected by evocations of Jewish celebrations?' It was argued that Jesus utilized the eschatological expectations around the messianic banquet to explain the nature of his ministry. Furthermore, he intended to share a Passover meal with his disciples at the proper time in order to indicate the character of his imminent death and how it was to be correctly understood. A similar conclusion was drawn in the next chapter via addressing the question, 'are the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord's Supper linked through the death of Jesus?' We argued that Jesus indicated the character of his death and how it was to be later understood during the Feeding of the Crowds.

In the penultimate chapter, we could see the outworking of retaining

⁶³¹ Bradshaw, *Origins*,

a distinction between *ethos* and *practice*. A contiguity in ethos between the Passover, messianic banquet, Last Supper and Lord's Supper was noted, while making allowances for differences in first-century Lord's Supper practice. Consequently, the question, 'why did the Lord's Supper come about in the first place?' was answered, 'because of the death and resurrection of Jesus'. His death gave the early church their reason to celebrate the Lord's Supper. In the final chapter, after addressing a number of preliminary concerns, I built an argument that Didache 9.4 may be taken as an implicit reference to the death of Jesus.

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